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THE
COMEDY
OF THE
PROVOK'D HUSBAND;
OR,
A JOURNEY TO LONDON;

BY SIR JOHN VANBRUGH & C. CIBBER, ESQ.

ADAPTED FOR THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

As performed at the Theatres-Royal
COVENT-GARDEN AND DRURY-LANE,

Regulated from the Prompt Books,
BY PERMISSION OF THE MANAGERS.

With the
LIFE OF THE AUTHOR;
AND A CRITIQUE,
By R. CUMBERLAND, Esq.

The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted in
the Representation.

Cooke's Edition.



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TO THE QUEEN.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY,

THE English theatre throws itself, with this play, at your Majesty's feet, for favour and support.

As their public diversions are a strong indication of the genius of a people, the following scenes are an attempt to establish such as are fit to entertain the minds of a sensible nation; and to wipe off that aspersion of barbarity, which the virtuosi among our neighbours have sometimes thrown upon our taste.

The Provok'd Husband is, at least, an instance that an English comedy may, to an unusual number of days, bring many thousands of his Majesty's good subjects together, to their emolument and delight, with innocence. And however little share of that merit my unequal pen may pretend to, yet I hope the just admirers of Sir John Vanbrugh will allow I have, at worst, been a careful guardian of his orphan muse, by leading it into your Majesty's royal protection

The design of this play being chiefly to expose and reform the licentious irregulatities that too often break upon the peace and happiness of the married state, where could so hazardous and unpopular an undertaking be secure, but in the protection of a princess, whose exemplary conjugal virtues have given such illustrious proof of what sublime felicity that holy state is capable?

And though a crown is no certain title to content ; yet, to the honour of that institution be it said, the royal harmony of hearts that now enchants us from the throne, is a reproach to the frequent disquiet of those many insensible subjects about it who (from his Majesty's paternal care of his people), have more leisure to be happy: and 'tis our Queen's peculiar glory, that we often see her as eminently raised above her circle in private happiness, as in dignity.

Yet Heaven, Madam, that has placed you on such height, to be the more conspicuous pattern of your sex, had still left your happiness imperfect, had it not given those inestimable treasures of your mind and person to the only Prince on earth that could have deserved them. A crown, received from any but the happy Monarch's hand, who invested you with that which you now adorn, had only seemed the work of fortune; but *thus* bestowed, the world acknowledges it the due reward of Providence, for one you once so gloriously refused.

But as the fame of such elevated virtue has lifted the plain addresses of a whole nation into eloquence, the best repeated eulogiums on that theme are but intrusions on your Majesty's greater pleasure of secretly deserving them. I therefore beg leave to subscribe myself,

May it please your Majesty,

Your Majesty's most devoted,

most obedient, and

most humble servant,

COLLEY CIBBER.

TO THE READER.

HAVING taking upon me, in the prologue to this play, to give the auditors some short account of that part of it which Sir John Vanbrugh left unfinished, and not thinking it advisable, in that place, to limit their judgment by so high a commendation as I thought it deserved; I have, therefore, for the satisfaction of the curious, printed the whole of what he wrote separately, under the single title he gave it of, *A Journey to London*, without presuming to alter a line.

Yet, when I own, that in my last conversation with him (which chiefly turned upon what he had done towards a comedy) he excused his not shewing it me till he had reviewed it, confessing the scenes were yet undigested, too long, and irregular, particularly in the lower characters, I have but one excuse for publishing what he never designed should come into the world as it then was, viz. I had no other way of taking those many faults to myself, which may be justly found in my presuming to finish it.

However, a judicious reader will find in his original papers, that the characters are strongly drawn, new, spirited, and natural; taken from sensible observations on high and lower life, and from a just indignation at the follies in fashion. All I could gather from him of what he intended in the catastrophe, was, that the conduct of his imaginary fine lady had so provoked him, that he designed actually to have made her husband turn her out of doors. But when his performance came, after his decease, to my hands, I thought such violent measures, however just they might be in real life, were too severe for comedy, and would want the proper surprise, which is due to the end of a play. Therefore with much ado, (and it was as much as I could do with probability,) I preserved the lady's chastity, that the sense of her errors might make a reconciliation not impracticable; and I hope the mitigation of her sentence has been since justified by its success.

My inclination to preserve as much as possible of Sir John, I soon saw had drawn the whole into an unusual length; the reader will, therefore, find here a scene or two of the lower humour, that were left out after the first day's representation.

The favour the town has shewn to the higher characters in this play, is a proof that their taste is not wholly vitiated by the barbarous entertainments that have been so expensively set off to corrupt it: but, while the repetition of the best old plays is so apt to give satiety, and good new ones so scarce a commodity, we must not wonder that the poor actors are sometimes forced to trade in trash for a livelihood.

I cannot yet take leave of the reader, without endeavouring to do justice to those principal actors who have so evidently contributed to the support of this comedy: and I wish I could separate the praises due to them, from the secret vanity of an author; for all I can say will still insinuate, that they could not have so highly excelled, unless the skill of the writer had given them proper occasion. However, as I had rather appear vain than unthankful, I will venture to say of Mr. Wilkes*, that in the last act, I never saw any passion take so natural a possession of an actor, or any actor take so tender a possession of his auditors.—Mr. Mills†, too, is confessed by every body to have surprised them, by so far excelling himself.—But there is no doing right to Mrs. Oldfield‡, without putting people in mind of what others, of great merit, have wanted to come near her—"Tis not enough to say, she here out-did her usual excellence. I might therefore justly leave her to the constant admiration of those spectators who have the pleasure of living while she is an actress. But as this is not the only time she has been the life of what I have given the public, so, perhaps, my saying a little more of so memorable an actress, may give this play a chance to be read, when the people of this age shall be ancestors—May it therefore give emulation to our successors of the stage, to know, that

* In Lord Townly.

† Mr. Manly.

‡ Lady Grace.

to the ending of the year 1727, a cotemporary comedian relates, that Mrs. Oldfield was then in her highest excellence of action, happy in all the rarely found requisites that meet in one person to complete them for the stage.—She was in stature just rising to that height, where the graceful can only begin to shew itself; of a lively aspect, and a command in her mien, that, like the principal figure in the finest painting, first seizes, and longest delights the eye of the spectators. Her voice was sweet, strong, piercing, and melodious; her pronounciation voluble, distinct, and musical; and her emphasis always placed where the spirit of the sense, in her periods, only demanded it. If she delighted more in the higher comic than in the tragic strain, 'twas because the last is too often written in a lofty disregard of nature. But in characters of modern practised life, she found occasions to add the particular air and manner which distinguished the different humours she presented; whereas, in tragedy, the manner of speaking varies as little as the blank verse it is written in.—She had one peculiar happiness from nature; she looked and maintained the agreeable, at a time when other fine women only raise admirers by their understanding.—The spectator was always as much informed by her eyes as her elocution; for the look is the only proof that an actor rightly conceives what he utters, there being scarce an instance, where the eyes do their part, that the elocution is known to be faulty. The qualities she had acquired, were the genteel and the elegant; the one in her air, and the other in her dress, never had her equal on the stage: and the ornaments she herself provided (particularly in this play) seemed in all respects the *paraphernalia* of a woman of quality. And of that sort were the characters she chiefly excelled in; but her natural good sense and lively turn of conversation, made her way so easy to ladies of the highest rank, that it is a less wonder if, on the stage, she sometimes was what might have become the finest woman in real life to have supported.

Theatre-Royal, Jan. 27, 1727-8.

C. CIBBER.

LIFE OF COLLEY CIBBER, ESQ.

THE English stage has been much indebted to Cibber both as an actor and a writer; and in the latter character doubly so, by his being not only a great assistant in supporting his numerous and entertaining dramatic pieces, but also its historiographer through a very long and important period. He has given us so pleasing a detail of the most material circumstances of his life, that I cannot apply to a more perfect source of intelligence. From which the greatest part of the following account will, in as concise a manner as possible, be extracted.

Mr. Cibber was born on the 6th of November, O. S. 1671, in Southampton-street, Covent-Garden. His father, Caius Gabriel Cibber, was a native of Holstein, and came into England to follow his profession of a statuary some time before the restoration of Charles II. The eminence he attained to in his art may be judged from the two celebrated images of raging and melancholy madness on the two piers of the great gate of Bethlehem hospital, and also by the basso relievo on the pedestal of that stupendous column called the Monument, erected in commemoration of the great fire of London in 1666. His mother was the daughter of William Colley, Esq. of Glaiston in Rutlandshire, whose father, Sir Anthony Colley, by his steady attachment to the royal cause, during the troubles of King Charles I.'s reign, he reduced his estate from three thousand to three hundred pounds *per annum*. The family of the Colleys, though extinct by the death of our laureat's uncle Edward Colley, Esq. from whom our author received his Christian name, and who was the last heir male of it, had been a very ancient one; it appearing from Wright's History of Rutlandshire, that they had been sheriffs and members of parliament from the reign of Henry VII. to the latter end of Charles I. In 1682, he was sent to the free-school of Grantham in Lincolnshire. About 1689, he was taken from school to stand for the election of boys into Winchester College: he had

no farther recommendation than his merit, and his being descended by the mother's side from William of Wickham the founder; this did not avail, and for want of interest he lost his election. Rather pleased with what he looked on as a reprieve from the confined life of a school-boy, than piqued at the loss, he returned to London, and there early conceived an inclination for the stage, which he thought proper to suppress; and therefore wrote down to his father, who was at that time employed at Chatsworth in Derbyshire, by the Earl (afterwards Duke) of Devonshire, in the raising his magnificent seat. In his letter he requested he might be sent as soon as possible to the university. This request his father complied with, and assured him in his answer, that as soon as his leisure would permit, he would go with him to Cambridge; but in the mean time sent for him to Chatsworth, that he might in the interim be more immediately under his own care.

Before young Cibber could set out on his journey for that place, the Prince of Orange, afterwards King William III. had landed in the west, so that when our author came to Nottingham, he found his father in arms among the forces which the Earl of Devonshire had raised to aid that prince. The old man considering this as a very proper season for a young fellow to distinguish himself; and being too far advanced in years to endure the fatigue of a winter campaign, entreated the Earl of Devonshire to accept of his son in his place, which his lordship not only consented to, but promised that when affairs were settled he would farther provide for him. Thus all at once was the current of Cibber's fortune entirely turned into a new channel, his thoughts of the university were smothered in ambition, and the intended academician converted, to his inexpressible delight, into a campaigner.

From Nottingham the troops marched to Oxford, where the prince and princess of Denmark met. Here the troops continued in quiet quarters till the settling

of the public tranquillity, when they were remanded back to Nottingham, and those who chose were granted their discharge, among whom was our author, who now quitted the field and the hopes of military preferment, and returned to his father at Chatsworth. His expectations now of future fortune, in a great measure depended upon the promises of patronage he had received from the Earl of Devonshire, who, on being reminded of them, desired his father to send him to London in the winter, when he would consider of some provision for him. Our author, with equal honour and candour, acknowledges that it might well require time to consider it, for it was then much harder to know what he was really fit for, than to have got him any thing he was not fit for. During his period of attendance on this nobleman, a frequent application to the amusements of the theatre, awakened in him a passion for the stage, which he seemed now determined on pursuing as his *summum bonum*, and in spite of father, mother, or friends, to fix on as his *ne plus ultra*.

In February 1689, our author first became a dangler about the theatre, where for some time he considered the privilege of every day seeing plays a sufficient consideration for the best of his services; so that he was full three quarters of a year before he was taken into a salary of ten shillings *per week*. The insufficiency of his voice, and the disadvantage of a meagre person, were bars to his setting out as a tragedian; and all that seemed promising in him was an aptness of ear, and in consequence of that a justness in his manner of speaking. The parts he played were very trivial; that in which he was first taken any considerable notice of being of no greater consequence than the Chaplain in the *Orphan*; and he informs us, that the commendations he received on that occasion from Goodman, a veteran of eminence on the stage, which he had at that time quitted, filled him with a transport which could scarcely be exceeded by those of Alexander or Charles XII. at the head of their vic-

torious armies. His next step to fame was in consequence of Queen Mary's having commanded the *Double Dealer* to be acted, when Mr. Kynaston, who originally played Lord Touchwood, being so ill as to be entirely incapable of going on for it, Mr. Cibber, on the recommendation of Congreve, the author of the play, undertook the part, and at a very short notice performed it so well, that Mr. Congreve not only paid him some very high compliments on it, but recommended him to an enlargement of salary from fifteen to twenty shillings *per week*.

He married in the year 1693, before he was quite twenty-two years of age, at a time when he himself informs us he had no more than twenty pounds a year, which his father allowed him, and the salary from the theatre, which could not amount to above thirty pounds *per annum* more. The consent of the young lady's father was not obtained, though he afterwards thought proper to give her some fortune, yet in the suddenness of his resentment he had put it out of his power to bestow on her all that he had originally intended, by appropriating great part of what he had so designed her to the building of a little retirement on the Thames, which was called *Shore's Folly*, and which has been demolished many years past.

But to proceed to his dramatic history. It appears his success did not greatly elevate the rank of estimation in which he stood with the patentees as an actor; for on the opening of Drury-Lane theatre in 1695, with the remainder of the old company, on the revolt of Betterton and several of the principal performers to Lincoln's Inn Fields, an occasional prologue which he had written, although acknowledged the best that had been offered, and very readily paid for, yet would not be admitted on any other terms than his absolutely relinquishing any claim to the speaking it himself.

Soon after his accepting, on a sudden emergency, the part of Fondlewife in the *Old Batchelor*, in which, by the closest imitation of Dogget, who had been the original performer of it, not only in dress,

but in voice and manner, he obtained an almost unbounded plaudit from the audience, which gave him additional reputation; yet not only this, but even the applause which in the ensuing year he obtained, both as an author and actor, by his first comedy, called *Love's Shift*, or *The Fool in Fashion*, were insufficient to promote him to any considerable cast of parts till the year 1697, when Sir John Vanbrugh did him a double honour, viz. first, by borrowing the hint of his comedy for the writing of his *Relapse*, by way of sequel to it; and secondly by fixing on him for the performance of his favourite character in it of Lord Fop-pington. In 1707, however, we find him considered by Mr. Rich, the patentee, as of some consequence, by his excepting him from the number of the performers whom he permitted Mr. Swiney to engage with for his theatre in the Haymarket (though our author, on finding himself slightly used by this manager, paid no regard to that exception, but joined Swiney); and in the ensuing year, when his friend Colonel Brett obtained a fourth share in the patent, and that the performers formed a coalition, and returned to Drury-Lane, Mr Cibber also conceded to the treaty, and returned with them: but, on the silencing of the patent in 1709, he, together with Wilks, Dogget, and Mrs. Oldfield, went over again to Mr. Swiney.

In 1711, he became united as joint patentee with Collier, Wilks, and Dogget, in the management of Drury-Lane theatre. And afterwards in a like partnership with Booth, Wilks, and Sir Rich. Steele. During his latter period, which did not entirely end till 1731, the English stage was perhaps in the most flourishing state it ever enjoyed. But the loss of Booth, Mrs. Oldfield, Mrs. Porter, and Mr. Wilks, lopping off its principal supports, Mr. Cibber sold out his share of the patent, and retired from the public business of the stage, to which however he, at a few particular periods, occasionally returned, performing at no less a salary than fifty guineas per night; and in the year 1746, though upwards of seventy-four,

he appeared in the character of Pandolph the pope's legate, in his own tragedy called *Papal Tyranny*, which he performed, notwithstanding his advanced age, with great vigour and spirit.

The vacant laurel he had been promoted to on the death of Mr. Eusden, in the year 1730, and the salary annexed, together with what he had saved from the emoluments of the theatre, and the sale of his share in the patent, set him above the necessity of continuing on it. After a number of years passed in the utmost ease, gaiety, and good-humour, he departed this life on the 12th of December 1757; his man-servant, whom he had talked to by his bed-side at six in the morning, in seeming good health, found him dead at nine, lying on his pillow just as he left him. He had just completed his 86th year.

Mr. Cibber has, in his own *Apology for his Life*, drawn so open and candid a portrait of himself, that I can by no means do more justice to his character than by taking separately the several features of that portrait to enable the reader to form an idea of him in the several points of view, of a man, an actor, and a writer.

A sprightly readiness of wit and repartee, which frequently enabled him to keep the laugh in his favour, with a fund of good-nature which was not to be ruffled when the jest happened to run against him; together with a great natural quickness of parts, and an intimate acquaintance with elegant and polite life; seem to be the principle materials of which his character was composed. Few men had more personal friends and admirers, and few men perhaps a greater number of undeserved enemies. A steady attachment to those revolutionary principles which he first set out with in life, though not pursued with virulence or offence to any one, created a party against him which almost constantly prevented his receiving those advantages from his writings, or that applause for his acting, which both justly merited. Yet, that the malevolence of his opponents had very little effect on his

spleen is apparent through the whole course of his disputes with Mr. Pope, who, though a much superior writer with respect to sublimity and correctness, yet stood very little chance when obliged to encounter with the keenness of his raillery, and the easy unaffected nonchalance of his humour. In a word, he seemed most truly of Sir Harry Wildair's temper; nor did it seem within the power of age to subdue his cheerful disposition. His easy good-humour, liveliness of conversation, and a peculiar happiness he had in telling a story, made him the life of every company; and but for the too evident marks of the hand of time on his features, he might have been imagined a young man. He was possessed of great humanity, benevolence, and universal philanthropy; and, by continued actions of charity, compassion, and beneficence, ever bore the strongest testimonial to his being master of that brightest of all sublunary gems, a truly good heart.

As an actor, nothing can surely be a stronger proof of his merit than the eminence which he attained to in that profession, in opposition to all the disadvantages which, by his own account, we find he had to struggle with. For, exclusive of the pains taken by many of his cotemporaries to keep him below the notice of the public, nature seemed herself to oppose his advancement.

His person at first, though not ill-made, was, he tells us, meagre, (but this defect was amended, as he latterly had a figure of sufficient fullness and weight for any part); his complexion was pale and dismal; and his voice weak, thin, and inclining to the treble. His greatest advantages seem to have been those of a very accurate ear, and a critical judgment of nature. His chief excellency lay in the walk of fops and feeble old men in comedy, in the former of which he does not appear ever to have been excelled in any period before him, or nearly equalled in any since. It is also apparent that he must have had great merit in tragedy as well as comedy, since the impression he

made on the audience was nearly the same in both; for it is well known that his excellence in representing the fops induced many to imagine him as great a coxcomb in real life as he appeared to be on the stage, so, he informs us, that from the delight he seemed to take in performing the villainous characters in tragedy, half his auditors were persuaded that a great share of the wickedness of them must have been in his own nature. But this, he confesses, that he considered rather as a praise than a censure of his performance, since aversion in that case is nothing more than an hatred incurred for being like the thing one ought to be like.

The third and last view in which we are to consider him is that of a writer. In this character he was at times very unjustly and severely treated by some of his cotemporary critics; but by none with more harshness than Mr. Pope. Party zeal, seems to have had a large share in exciting opposition against him, since the audience has, through a course of a century, received great pleasure from most of his plays, which have constantly formed part of the entertainment of every season, and many of them repeatedly performed with that approbation which they undoubtedly merit. The most important charge against him seems to have been, that his plots were not always his own, which reflection would have been just had he produced no plays but such as he had altered from other authors; but in his first letter to Mr. Pope he assures us, and with great truth, that his *Fool in Fashion*, and *Careless Husband*, in particular, were as much (if not so valuable) originals as any thing his antagonist had ever written. And in excuse for those which he did only alter, or indeed compile from others, it is evident that they were for the most part composed by collecting what little was good in several pieces which had no success, and were laid aside as theatrical lumber. On this account he was frequently treated as a plagiarist; yet it is certain that many of those plays which had been dead to the stage

out of all memory, have, by his assisting hand, not only been restored to life, but have even continued ever since in full spirit and vigour. On this account surely the public and the original authors are greatly indebted to him; that sentiment of the poet being certainly true,

Chi trae l'Uom del Sepolcro, ed in Vita lo serba.

PETRARCH.

Nor have other writers been so violently attacked for the same fault. Mr. Dryden thought it no diminution of his fame to take the same liberty with the *Tempest* and the *Troilus and Cressida* of Shakspeare. Nor do these altered plays, as Mr. Cibber justly pleads, take from the merit of those more successful pieces, which were entirely his own. A taylor that can make a new coat well, is not surely the worse workman because he can mend an old one: a cobbler may be allowed to be useful, though no one will contend for his being famous; nor is any man blameable for doing a little good, though he cannot do so much as another. Besides, Mr. Cibber candidly declares, that whenever he took upon him to make some dormant play of an old author fit for the stage, it was honestly not to be idle that set him to work, as a good housewife will mend old linen when she has no better employment. But when he was more warmly engaged by a subject entirely new, he only thought it a good subject, when it seemed worthy of an abler pen than his own, and might prove as useful to the hearer as profitable to himself. And, indeed, this essential piece of merit must be granted to his own original plays, viz. that they always tend to improve the mind, as well as to entertain; that vice and folly, however pleasingly habited, are constantly lashed, ridiculed, or reclaimed in them, and virtue as constantly rewarded.

There is an argument, indeed, which might be pleaded in favour of this author, were his plays possessed of a much smaller share of merit than is to be found in them; which is, that he wrote, at least in the early part of his life, through necessity, for the

support of his increasing family; his precarious income as an actor being then too scanty to supply it with the necessaries of life: and with great pleasantry he acquaints us, that his muse and his spouse were equally prolific; that the one was seldom mother of a child, but in the same year the other made him the father of a play; and that they have had a dozen of each sort between them, of both which kinds some died in their infancy, and near an equal number of each were alive when he quitted the theatre. No wonder, then, when the muse is only called upon by family duty, that she should not always rejoice in the fruit of her labour. This excuse, I say, might be pleaded in Mr. Cibber's favour: but I must confess myself of the opinion, that there is no occasion for the plea, and that his plays have merit enough to speak in their own cause, without the necessity of begging indulgence. His plots, whether original or borrowed, are lively and full of business, yet not confused in the action, nor bungled in the catastrophe. His characters are well-drawn, and his dialogue easy, genteel, and natural. And if he has not the intrinsic wit of a Congreve or a Vanbrugh, yet there is a luxuriance of fancy in his thoughts which gives an almost equal pleasure, and a purity in his sentiments and morals much to be admired. In a word, I think the English stage is as much obliged to Mr. Cibber for a fund of rational entertainment as to any dramatic writer this nation has ever produced, Shakspeare only excepted; and one unanswerable evidence of the merits of his plays is the satisfaction the public always express at the performance of them; for although the number of his dramatic pieces is very extensive, most of them are now, and seem likely to continue among the acting and favourite plays.

As a writer, exclusive of the stage, his two letters to Mr. Pope, and his *Apology for his own Life*, are too well known, and too justly admired to leave me any room to expatiate on their worth. His dramatic pieces are as follow:

1. *Love's last Shift*. A Comedy. 4to. 1696.
 2. *Woman's Wit*. A Comedy. 4to. 1697.
 3. *Xerxes*. A Tragedy. 4to. 1699.
 4. *Love makes a Man*. A Comedy. 4to. 1700.
 5. *King Richard the Third*. A Tragedy. 4to. 1700.
 6. *She wou'd and She wou'd not*. A Comedy. 4to. 1703.
 7. *Careless Husband*. A Comedy. 4to. 1704.
 8. *Perolla and Izadora*. A Tragedy. 4to. 1706.
 9. *School-Boy*. A Farce. 4to. 1707.
 10. *Comical Lovers*. A Comedy. 4to. 1707.
 11. *Double Gallant*. A Comedy. 4to. 1707.
 12. *Lady's last Stake*. A Comedy. 4to. 1708.
 13. *Rival Fools*. A Comedy. 4to. 1709.
 14. *Venus and Adonis*. A Masque. 8vo. 1715.
 15. *Myrtillo*. A Pastoral Interlude. 8vo. 1715.
 16. *Nonjuror*. A Comedy. 8vo. 1718.
 17. *Ximena*. A Tragedy. 8vo. 1719.
 18. *Refusal*. A Comedy. 8vo. 1720.
 19. *Hob; or, The Country Wake*. A Farce. 12mo. 1720.
 20. *Cæsar in Egypt*. A Tragedy. 8vo. 1725.
 21. *Provok'd Husband*. A Comedy, (part by Sir John Vanbrugh.) 8vo. 1727.
 22. *Rival Queens*. A Burlesque Tragedy. 8vo. 1729.
 23. *Love in a Riddle*. A Pastoral. 8vo. 1729.
 24. *Damon and Phillida*. A Ballad Opera. 8vo. 1729.
 25. *Papal Tyranny in the Reign of King John*. A Tragedy. 8vo. 1745.
- His name is put to an Opera called *Chuck*.

THE EDITOR.



CRITIQUE
ON
THE PROVOK'D HUSBAND,
OR,
A JOURNEY TO LONDON.

"THE design of this play," as Cibber states it, in his Dedication to the Queen, "is to expose and reform the licentious irregularities, that too often break in upon the peace and happiness of the married state;" and it appears from his Address to the Reader, that Sir John Vanbrugh had meditated to inflict unmitigated punishment upon "his imaginary fine lady, by making her husband turn her out of his doors;" but he, upon whom the task of combining these unfinished scenes devolved, "thought these violent measures too severe for comedy, and with much ado preserved the lady's chastity, that the sense of her errors might make a reconciliation not impracticable."

I cannot doubt but Cibber's judgment decided rightly in this circumstance, and though he speaks with great modesty "of taking the many faults to himself, which may be justly found in his presuming to finish it," I must think, that he who collects and models these disjointed parts into the form, consistency, and regularity of a whole, perfect in its proportions, and beautiful in its construction, is entitled to a full participation in the fame that accrues to its first projector from the successful representation of it,

I perfectly remember to have heard Mr. Doddington relate, that Vanbrugh told him, that he had sketched out some loose scenes, which, in quantity, were enough for a comedy, but which had no plan or properties of an entire composition in them, and this confirms the description which Cibber gives of them in his prologue:—

“ Such was the piece his latest pen design’d,

“ But left no traces of his plan behind;

“ Luxuriant scenes, unprun’d, and half-contriv’d.”

I further recollect a curious anecdote respecting this comedy, which, in the long course of my intimate habits with Mr. Doddington, I have heard him mention more than once, which is, that he was present at the first night of this comedy; and when the audience, who, in their imagination, gave the comic part of the plot to Cibber, were pushing at him in the character of Sir Francis Wronghead, with a violence that seem’d to threaten condemnation to the play, Cibber stopped the dialogue, and, coming forward to the front of the stage, addressed the pit in effect as follows:—“ Gentlemen, I humbly conceive, that the
“ disapprobation you are led to express of these parti-
“ cular scenes, must arise from your idea, that I am
“ the author of them, and have presumed to attach
“ them to the graver plan of a much superior writer,
“ now no more. I beg leave, therefore, to assure
“ you, that it is not in this part of the comedy you
“ are to look for me. The character, in which I now
“ appear before you, and every thing relating to the
“ Journey to London, so distinguished, are entirely
“ from the pen of Sir John Vanbrugh, and permit me
“ to warn you of this, lest you should be induced to
“ disgrace yourselves, by damning the finest specimen
“ of comic writing that the stage is in possession of.”

As I have no doubt that Mr. Doddington was correct in his fact, I am glad that I recollect an anecdote so apposite to the subject I am upon, and which did not occur to me when speaking of that distinguished person in my Memoirs lately published. The merit,

therefore, is with Cibber, of having twice rescued a production that does honour to the English stage. Yet he and Vanbrugh, who, in this instance, have given dignity as well as lustre to the dramatic muse, were singled out to be the butts of Pope and Swift, who could as easily have built the Edystone with their own hands, as they could have written this play, and of whom it may be said, that malice was the proper whetstone of their wit.

As I think it more within the province of the dramatic poet to deal out pardon to repentant characters, than punishment to obdurate ones, I am much inclined to believe, that the play was greatly benefited by reversing Vanbrugh's plan with respect to Lady Townly, especially if it had included the loss of her honour, which, Cibber says, he had such difficulty to save; for though I can well conceive that Vanbrugh would have work'd up a striking and impressive catastrophe, according to his own design, yet I have no scruple to give my voice in favour of the alteration, by which the chastity of the wife, and of course the decorum of the stage, was preserved from violation.

We now therefore know to a certainty, that it is to the author of *The Careless Husband* we are indebted for that beautiful and affecting scene, in which Lady Townly, awaking to a consciousness of her misconduct, and sinking into the arms of Lady Grace, thus intreats her husband, who is in the act of leaving her, to stay and listen to her last appeal,—“ Yet stay, my lord, the little I would say will not deserve an insult, and, undeserved, I know your nature gives it not: but, as you have called in friends to witness your resentment, let them be equal hearers of my last reply:” she then proceeds to relate what she rightly terms “ the story of her heart,” and a story it is, which never failed to reach the hearts of the hearers, when representation did it justice; a story which every young woman of beauty, birth, and fashion, ought to lay to her heart, every parent and guardian recommend as a lesson, and which gives to Cibber the fairly-earn'd

and well-deserv'd name of a dramatic poet, for ever dear to the stage, and worthy to be held in honour by posterity.

I must now conclude by offering a few remarks as they occur to me upon examination of this justly-favoured play. It should seem that Cibber found the manuscript of Vanbrugh's sketch under the single title of *A Journey to London*. It is clear, therefore, that the first designer meant to make the comic characters of the Wronghead family the most prominent objects of his dramatic groupe; but how he purposed to interweave his moral episode of the lord and lady, so as to melt it into harmony with his figures in the foreground, does not appear, and, probably, never did appear so as to illuminate his successor with any glimpse of his idea. Still it must be obvious to every man's judgment, that it ought to be done; the task of doing it of course devolved upon Cibber, and, it must be owned, he has not fully overcome the difficulty he had to encounter; for the two plots (so I must call them, as each is too considerable to be stiled an episode) have the property of the Asymptotes, of approaching without coincidence. The Wrongheads are indeed related to Manly; report is made of them to the Townlys, both by him and their servant Moody; but, except by intermediate agents, the chief characters never correspond: it remains, therefore, a chasm in the composition never healed, a breach in the structure of this admirable drama, which criticism cannot overlook, nor candour point to without regret.

In Lord Townly I can spy no fault: in his morality and right reason I discover no tincture of pedantry or parade. I will not say the same for Manly: his character does not please me; there is a rigidity in it that disgusts me, and in his introductory scene with Lord Townly and Lady Grace in the first act, he sets out by volunteering an insinuation to my lord, which he more clearly explains as he proceeds, to be that of turning Lady Townly out of doors, expressly saying, that "in strict justice she ought to go rather than

himself;" and again, when Lady Grace remonstrates to him, that "this is fomenting things," he replies, "Fomentations, madam, are sometimes necessary to dispeel tumours: though I do not directly advise my lord to do this—This is only what upon the same provocation I would do myself." This strikes me as a mean, unmanly, vulgar, and unwarrantable way of creating an irreparable breach between husband and wife; and at the same time that he avows it to be the very measure he would take himself, he conceives, that he evades the just interpretation of Lady Grace, by the sneaking salvo that he *does not directly advise it*. The reader will take notice, that all this while nothing has been previously stated against Lady Townly to provoke this virulence, but that she is not come home, and is likely to stay out late.

There are many sentiments oracularly delivered by this gentleman in the same scene, which in my poor opinion do no honour either to his head or his heart; and in particular I should doubt if he is correct in his morality, when he finds an excuse for Lord Townly's present of five hundred pounds to his lady, upon the grounds of this consolatory reflection—"that the greater your indulgence, the more you have to reproach her with." This Mr. Manly is pleased to offer as a proof that he is "sometimes upon the side of good-nature;" but if Mr. Manly's good-nature leads him to confer favours for the purpose of accumulating reproaches, I should be apt to call him a most malicious benefactor, and much such a friend to his fellow-creature as the butcher is to the ox, when he feeds him fat to fit him for the slaughter.

Before I quite take leave of Mr. Manly, I should add, that he concludes this scene with a piece of information respecting his connection with the Wronghead family, which he communicates to Lady Grace. "I enjoy at this time a pretty estate which Sir Francis was heir-at-law to, but—by his being a booby, the last will of an obstinate old uncle gave it to me—" and the obstinate Mr. Manly, being no booby, but

a very clever fellow, kept it with as little justice as the obstinate old uncle gave it to him. I can only say for myself, that I have more respect for the character of the disinterested booby, who lost his legal right thro' defect of nature, than for the successful heir who superseded him in that right, and was not ashamed to confess that what he got without merit he retained without mercy.

Having dwelt so long upon the serious characters of this play, I must leave the comic ones to recommend themselves. Though we must look back a little in point of time to find so much clownish ignorance as some of these exhibit, yet they have been drawn from nature: and if time had even broken their models, still these faithful copies would continue to please; for as long as knaves and sharpers shall persist to prey upon folly and credulity, so long will the family of the Wrongheads repeat their *Journey to London*, and be welcomed by the theatres.

R. CUMBERLAND.



PROLOGUE.

*THIS play took birth from principles of truth,
To make amends for errors past of youth.
A bard that's now no more, in riper days,
Conscious, review'd the licence of his plays:
And though applause his wanton muse had fir'd,
Himself condemn'd what sensual minds admir'd.
At length he own'd, that plays should let you see,
Not only what you are, but ought to be;
Though vice was natural, 'twas never meant
The stage should shew it, but for punishment.
Warm with that thought, his muse once more took flame;
Resolv'd to bring licentious life to shame.
Such was the piece his latest pen design'd,
But left no traces of his plan behind.
Luxuriant scenes, unprun'd, or half-contriv'd;
Yet, through the mass his native fire surviv'd:
Rough, as rich ore in mines, the treasure lay,
Yet still 'twas rich, and forms at length a play;
In which the bold compiler boasts no merit,
But that his pains have sav'd your scenes of spirit:
Not scenes that would a noisy joy impart,
But such as hush the mind, and warm the heart.
From praise of hands, no sure account he draws,
But fix'd attention is sincere applause:
If then (for hard you'll own the task) his art
Can to these embryon-scenes new life impart,
The living proudly would exclude his lays,
And to the buried bard resigns the praise.*

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

LORD TOWNLY, *of a regular Life.*

MR. MANLY, *an Admirer of Lady Grace.*

SIR FRANCIS WRONGHEAD, *a Country Gentleman.*

SQUIRE RICHARD, *his Son, a mere Whelp.*

COUNT BASSET, *a Gamester.*

JOHN MOODY, *Servant to Sir Francis, an honest
Clown.*

LADY TOWNLY, *immoderate in her Pursuit of Plea-
sures.*

LADY GRACE, *Sister to Lord Townly, of exemplary
Virtue.*

LADY WRONGHEAD, *Wife to Sir Francis, inclined
to be a fine Lady.*

MISS JENNY, *her Daughter, pert and forward.*

MRS. MOTHERLY, *one that lets Lodgings.*

MYRTILLA, *her Niece, seduced by the Count.*

MRS. TRUSTY, *Lady Townly's Woman.*



THE PROVOK'D HUSBAND.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Lord TOWNLY's Apartment.

Lord Townly, solus. WHY did I marry?—Was it not evident, my plain, rational scheme of life was impracticable, with a woman of so different a way of thinking?—Is there one article of it that she has not broke in upon?—Yes, let me do her justice—her reputation—that—I have no reason to believe is in question—But then how long her profligate course of pleasures may make her able to keep it is a shocking question! and her presumption while she keeps it—insupportable! for on the pride of that single virtue she seems to lay it down as a fundamental point, that the free indulgence of every other vice this fertile town affords, is the birth-right prerogative of a woman of quality—Amazing! that a creature so warm in the pursuit of her pleasures, should never cast one thought towards her happiness—Thus, while she admits of no lover, she thinks it a greater merit still, in her chastity, not to care for her husband; and while she herself is solacing in one continual round of cards and good company, he, poor wretch, is left at large, to take care of his own contentment—'Tis time, indeed, some care were taken, and speedily there shall be—Yet, let me not be rash—Perhaps, this disappointment of my heart may make me too impatient; and some tempers, when reproach'd, grow more untractable—Here she comes—Let me be calm awhile.

Enter Lady TOWNLY.

Going out so soon after dinner, madam?

Lady T. Lard, my lord! what can I possibly do at home?

Lord T. What does my sister, Lady Grace, do at home?

Lady T. Why, that is to me amazing! Have you ever any pleasure at home?

Lord T. It might be in your power, madam, I confess, to make it a little more comfortable to me.

Lady T. Comfortable! and so, my good lord, you would really have a woman of my rank and spirit stay at home to comfort her husband. Lord, what notions of life some men have!

Lord T. Don't you think, madam, some ladies' notions are full as extravagant?

Lady T. Yes, my lord, when the tame doves live coop'd within the pen of your precepts, I do think 'em prodigious indeed.

Lord T. And when they fly wild about this town, madam, pray what must the world think of 'em then?

Lady T. Oh, this world is not so ill-bred as to quarrel with any woman for liking it!

Lord T. Nor am I, madam, a husband so well-bred as to bear my wife's being so fond of it; in short, the life you lead, madam—

Lady T. Is to me the pleasantest life in the world.

Lord T. I should not dispute your taste, madam, if a woman had a right to please nobody but herself.

Lady T. Why, whom would you have her please?

Lord T. Sometimes her husband.

Lady T. And don't you think a husband under the same obligation?

Lord T. Certainly.

Lady T. Why, then, we are agreed, my lord—For if I never go abroad, till I am weary of being at home—which you know is the case—is it not equally reasonable, not to come home, till one is weary of being abroad?

Lord T. If this be your rule of life, madam, 'tis time to ask you one serious question.

Lady T. Don't let it be long a coming then—for I am in haste.

Lord T. Madam, when I am serious, I expect a serious answer.

Lady T. Before I know the question?

Lord T. Psha!—Have I power, madam, to make you serious by entreaty?

Lady T. You have.

Lord T. And you promise to answer me sincerely?

Lady T. Sincerely.

Lord T. Now then recollect your thoughts, and tell me seriously why you married me?

Lady T. You insist upon truth, you say?

Lord T. I think I have a right to it.

Lady T. Why, then, my lord, to give you at once a proof of my obedience and sincerity—I think—I married—to take off that restraint that lay upon my pleasures while I was a single woman.

Lord T. How, madam! is any woman under less restraint after marriage than before it?

Lady T. Oh, my lord, my lord! they are quite different creatures! Wives have infinite liberties in life, that would be terrible in an unmarried woman to take.

Lord T. Name one.

Lady T. Fifty if you please—To begin, then,—in the morning—A married woman may have men at her toilet; invite them to dinner; appoint them a party in the stage-box at the play; engross the conversation there; call them by their Christian names; talk louder than the players; from thence jaunt into the city; take a frolicsome supper at an India-House; perhaps, in her *gaieté de cœur*, toast a pretty fellow; then clatter again to this end of the town; break with the morning, into an assembly; crowd to the hazard-table; throw a familiar *levant* upon some sharp, lurching man of quality, and if he demands his money, turn it off with a loud laugh, and cry—you'll owe it him, to vex him, ha, ha!

Lord T. Prodigious.

[*Aside.*

Lady T. These now, my lord, are some few of the many modish amusements that distinguish the privilege of a wife from that of a single woman.

Lord T. Death, madam! what law has made these liberties less scandalous in a wife, than in an unmarried woman?

Lady T. Why the strongest law in the world, custom—custom time out of mind, my lord.

Lord T. Custom, madam, is the law of fools; but it shall never govern me.

Lady T. Nay, then, my lord, 'tis time for me to observe the laws of prudence.

Lord T. I wish I could see an instance of it.

Lady T. You shall have one this moment, my lord; for I think, when a man begins to lose his temper at home, if a woman has any prudence, why—she'll go abroad till he comes to himself again. [*Going.*

Lord T. Hold, madam—I am amaz'd you are not more uneasy at the life you lead. You don't want sense, and yet seem void of all humanity; for, with a blush I say it, I think I have not wanted love.

Lady T. Oh, don't say that, my lord, if you suppose I have my senses.

Lord T. What is it I have done to you? What can you complain of?

Lady T. Oh, nothing in the least! 'Tis true, you have heard me say, I have owed my Lord Lurcher an hundred pounds these three weeks—but what then—a husband is not liable to his wife's debts of honour, you know—and if a silly woman will be uneasy about money she can't be sued for, what's that to him? As long as he loves her, to be sure, she can have nothing to complain of.

Lord T. By Heaven, if my whole fortune thrown into your lap, could make you delight in the cheerful duties of a wife, I should think myself a gainer by the purchase.

Lady T. That is my lord, I might receive your

whole estate, provided you were sure I would not spend a shilling of it.

Lord T. No, madam; were I master of your heart, your pleasures would be mine: but, different as they are, I'll feed even your follies, to deserve it—Perhaps you may have some other trifling debts of honour abroad, that keep you out of humour at home—at least it shall not be my fault if I have not more of your company—There, there's a bill of five hundred—and now madam—

Lady T. And now, my lord, down to the ground I thank you—Now I am convinced, were I weak enough to love this man, I should never get a single guinea from him. [Aside.]

Lord T. If it be no offence, madam—

Lady T. Say what you please, my lord; I am in that harmony of spirits it is impossible to put me out of humour.

Lord T. How long, in reason then, do you think that sum ought to last you?

Lady T. Oh, my dear, dear lord! now you have spoiled all again: how is it possible I should answer for an event that so utterly depends upon fortune? But to shew you that I am more inclined to get money than to throw it away—I have a strong prepossession, that with this five hundred, I shall win five thousand.

Lord T. Madam, if you were to win ten thousand, it would be no satisfaction to me.

Lady T. Oh, the churl! ten thousand! what not so much as wish I might win ten thousand!—Ten thousand! Oh, the charming sum! what infinite pretty things might a woman of spirit do with ten thousand guineas! O' my conscience, if she were a woman of true spirit—she—she might lose them all again.

Lord T. And I had rather it should be so, madam, provided I could be sure that were the last you would lose.

Lady T. Well, my lord, to let you see I design to

play all the good house-wife I can; I am now going to a party at *quadrille*, only to piddle with a little of it, at poor two guineas a fish, with the Duchess of Quiteright. [Exit.

Lord T. Insensible creature! neither reproaches or indulgence, kindness or severity, can wake her to the least reflection! Continual licence has lull'd her into such a lethargy of care, that she speaks of her excesses with the same easy confidence, as if they were so many virtues. What a turn has her head taken!—But how to cure it—I am afraid the physic must be strong that reaches her—Lenitives, I see, are to no purpose—take my friend's opinion—Manly will speak freely—my sister with tenderness to both sides. They know my case—I'll talk with them.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Mr. Manly, my lord, has sent to know if your lordship was at home.

Lord T. They did not deny me?

Serv. No, my lord.

Lord T. Very well; step up to my sister, and say, I desire to speak with her.

Serv. Lady Grace is here, my lord. [Exit *Serv.*

Enter Lady GRACE.

Lord T. So, lady fair; what pretty weapon have you been killing your time with?

Lady G. A huge folio, that has almost killed me—I think I have read half my eyes out.

Lord T. Oh! you should not pore so much just after dinner, child.

Lady G. That's true; but any body's thoughts are better always than one's own, you know.

Lord T. Who's there?

Enter Servant.

Leave word at the door, I am at home to nobody but Mr. Manly. [Exit *Serv.*

Lady G. And why is he excepted, pray, my lord?

Lord T. I hope, madam, you have no objection to his company?

Lady G. Your particular orders, upon my being here, look, indeed, as if you thought I had not.

Lord T. And your ladyship's inquiry into the reason of those orders, shews, at least, it was not a matter indifferent to you.

Lady G. Lord, you make the oddest constructions, brother!

Lord T. Look you, my grave Lady Grace—in one serious word—I wish you had him.

Lady G. I can't help that.

Lord T. Ha! you can't help it; ha, ha! The flat simplicity of that reply was admirable!

Lady G. Pooh, you tease one, brother!

Lord T. Come, I beg pardon, child—this is not a point, I grant you, to trifle upon; therefore, I hope you'll give me leave to be serious.

Lady G. If you desire it, brother; though, upon my word, as to Mr. Manly's having any serious thoughts of me—I know nothing of it.

Lord T. Well—there's nothing wrong in your making a doubt of it. But, in short, I find, by his conversation of late, that he has been looking round the world for a wife; and if you were to look round the world for a husband, he is the first man I would give to you.

Lady G. Then, whenever he makes me any offer, brother, I will certainly tell you of it.

Lord T. Oh! that's the last thing he'll do: he'll never make you an offer, till he's pretty sure it won't be refused.

Lady G. Now you make me curious. Pray, did he ever make any offer of that kind to you?

Lord T. Not directly; but that imports nothing: he is a man too well acquainted with the female world to be brought into a high opinion of any one woman, without some well-examined proof of her merit; yet I have reason to believe, that your good sense, your turn of mind, and your way of life, have brought him to so favourable a one of you, that a few days will reduce him to talk plainly to me; which as yet,

notwithstanding our friendship, I have neither declined nor encouraged him to.

Lady G. I am mighty glad we are so near in our way of thinking; for, to tell you the truth, he is much upon the same terms with me: you know he has a satirical turn; but never lashes any folly, without giving due encomiums to its opposite virtue; and, upon such occasions, he is sometimes particular, in turning his compliments upon me, which I don't receive with any reserve, lest he should imagine I take them to myself.

Lord T. You are right, child; when a man of merit makes his addresses, good sense may give him an answer, without scorn or coquetry.

Lady G. Hush! he's here—

Enter Mr. MANLY.

Man. My lord, your most obedient.

Lord T. Dear Manly, yours—I was thinking to send to you.

Man. Then, I am glad I am here, my lord—Lady Grace, I kiss your hands—What, only you two! How many visits may a man make, before he falls into such unfashionable company? A brother and sister soberly sitting at home; when the whole town is a gadding! I question if there is so particular a *tête à tête* again, in the whole parish of St. James's.

Lady G. Fie, fie, Mr. Manly! how censorious you are!

Man. I had not made the reflection, madam; but that I saw you an exception to it—Where's my lady?

Lord T. That, I believe, is impossible to guess.

Man. Then I won't try, my lord—

Lord T. But, 'tis probable I may hear of her, by that time I have been four or five hours in bed.

Man. Now, if that were my case—I believe I—But I beg pardon, my lord.

Lord T. Indeed, sir, you shall not: you will oblige me if you speak out; for it was upon this head I wanted to see you.

Man. Why, then, my lord, since you oblige me

to proceed—if that were my case—I believe I should certainly sleep in another house.

Lady G. How do you mean?

Man. Only a compliment, madam.

Lady G. A compliment!

Man. Yes, madam, in rather turning myself out of doors than her!

Lady G. Don't you think that would be going too far?

Man. I don't know but it might, madam; for, in strict justice, I think she ought rather to go than I.

Lady G. This is new doctrine, Mr. Manly.

Man. As old, madam, as love, honour, and obey. When a woman will stop at nothing that's wrong, why should a man balance any thing that's right?

Lady G. Bless me! but this is fomenting things—

Man. Fomentations, madam, are sometimes necessary to dispel tumours: though I do not directly advise my lord to do this—This is only what, upon the same provocation, I would do myself.

Lady G. Ay, ay, you would do! Bachelors' wives, indeed, are finely governed.

Man. If the married men's were as well—I am apt to think we should not see so many mutual plagues taking the air in separate coaches.

Lady G. Well, but suppose it your own case; would you part with your wife, because she now and then stays out in the best company?

Lord T. Well said, Lady Grace! Come, stand up for the privilege of your sex. This is like to be a warm debate. I shall edify.

Man. Madam, I think a wife, after midnight, has no occasion to be in better company than her husband's; and that frequent unreasonable hours make the best company—the worst she can fall into.

Lady G. But if people of condition are to keep company with one another, how is it possible to be done, unless one conforms to their hours?

Man. I can't find that any woman's good breeding obliges her to conform to other people's vices.

Lord T. I doubt, child, here we are got a little on the wrong side of the question.

Lady G. Why so, my lord? I can't think the case so bad as Mr. Manly states it—People of quality are not tied down to the rules of those who have their fortunes to make.

Man. No people, madam, are above being tied down to some rules, that have fortunes to lose.

Lady G. Pooh! I'm sure, if you were to take my side of the argument, you would be able to say something more for it.

Lord T. Well, what say you to that, Manly?

Man. Why, troth, my lord, I have something to say.

Lady G. Ay! that I should be glad to hear, now.

Lord T. Out with it.

Man. Then, in one word, this, my lord—I have often thought that the misconduct of my lady has, in a great measure been owing to your lordship's treatment of her.

Lady G. Bless me!

Lord T. My treatment!

Man. Ay, my lord, you so idolized her before marriage, that you even indulged her like a mistress after it: in short, you continued the lover, when you should have taken up the husband.

Lady G. Oh, frightful! this is worse than t'other; can a husband love a wife too well?

Man. As easy, madam, as a wife may love her husband too little.

Lord T. So; you two are never like to agree, I find.

Lady G. Don't be positive, brother—I am afraid we are both of a mind already. [*Aside.*] And do you, at this rate, ever hope to be married, Mr. Manly?

Man. Never, madam, till I can meet with a woman that likes my doctrine.

Lady G. 'Tis pity but your mistress should hear it.

Man. Pity me, madam, when I marry the woman that won't hear it.

Lady G. I think, at least, he can't say that's me.

[*Aside.*]

Man. And so, my lord, by giving her more power than was needful, she has none where she wants it; having such entire possession of you, she is not mistress of herself. And, mercy on us! how many fine women's heads have been turned upon the same occasion!

Lord T. Oh, Manly, 'tis too true! there's the source of my disquiet; she knows, and has abused her power: nay, I am still so weak, (with shame I speak it) 'tis not an hour ago, that in the midst of my impatience, I gave her another bill for five hundred to throw away.

Man. Well, my lord, to let you see I am sometimes upon the side of good-nature, I won't absolutely blame you; for the greater your indulgence, the more you have to reproach her with.

Lady G. Ay, Mr. Manly, here now I begin to come in with you. Who knows, my lord, but you may have a good account of your kindness?

Man. That I am afraid, we had not best depend upon. But since you have had so much patience, my lord, even go on with it a day or two more; and upon her ladyship's next sally, be a little rounder in your expostulations; if that don't work—drop her some cool hints of a determined reformation, and leave her—to breakfast upon them.

Lord T. You are perfectly right. How valuable is a friend in our anxiety!

Man. Therefore, to divert that, my lord, I beg, for the present, we may call another cause.

Lady G. Ay, for goodness' sake, let us have done with this.

Lord T. With all my heart.

Lady G. Have you no news abroad, Mr. Manly?

Man. *A propos*—I have some, madam; and I believe, my lord, as extraordinary in its kind—

Lord T. Pray, let us have it.

Man. Do you know that your country neighbour, and my wise kinsman, sir Francis Wronghead, is coming to town with his whole family?

Lord T. The fool! What can be his business here?

Man. Oh! of the last importance, I'll assure you—No less than the business of the nation.

Lord T. Explain.

Man. He has carried his election—against sir John Worthland.

Lord T. The deuce! What! for—for—

Man. The famous borough of Guzzledown.

Lord T. A proper representative, indeed!

Lady G. Pray, Mr. Manly, don't I know him?

Man. You have dined with him, madam, when I was last down with my lord, at Bellmont.

Lady G. Was not that he that got a little merry before dinner, and upset the tea-table in making his compliments to my lady?

Man. The same.

Lady G. Pray what are his circumstances? I know but very little of him.

Man. Then he is worth your knowing, I can tell you, madam. His estate, if clear, I believe, might be a good two thousand pounds a-year; though as it was left him, saddled with two jointures, and two weighty mortgages upon it, there is no saying what it is—But that he might be sure never to mend it, he married a profuse young hussy, for love, without a penny of money. Thus, having, like his brave ancestors, provided heirs for the family (for his dove breeds like a tame pigeon), he now finds children and interest-money making such a bawling about his ears, that at last he has taken the friendly advice of his kinsman, the good Lord Danglecourt, to run his estate two thousand pounds more in debt, to put the whole management of what is left into Paul Pillage's hands, that he may be at leisure himself to retrieve his affairs, by being a parliament-man.

Lord T. A most admirable scheme, indeed!

Man. And with this politic prospect, he is now upon his journey to London—

Lord T. What can it end in?

Man. Pooh! a journey into the country again.

Lord T. Do you think he'll stir, till his money is gone; or, at least, 'till the session is over?

Man. If my intelligence is right, my lord, he won't sit long enough to give his vote for a turnpike.

Lord T. How so?

Man. Oh, a bitter business; he had scarce a vote in the whole town, beside the returning officer. Sir John will certainly have it heard at the bar of the house, and send him about his business again.

Lord T. Then he has made a fine business of it, indeed.

Man. Which, as far as my little interest will go, shall be done in as few days as possible.

Lady G. But why would you ruin the poor gentleman's fortune, Mr. Manly?

Man. No, madam; I would only spoil his project, to save his fortune.

Lady G. How are you concerned enough to do either?

Man. Why—I have some obligations to the family, madam; I enjoy, at this time, a pretty estate, which sir Francis was heir at law to: but—by his being a booby, the last will of an obstinate old uncle gave it to me.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. [To *Man.*] Sir, here is one of your servants from your house desires to speak with you.

Man. Will you give him leave to come in, my lord?

Lord T. Sir—the ceremony's of your own making.

Enter MANLY's Servant.

Man. Well, James, what's the matter?

James. Sir, here is John Moody just come to town: he says sir Francis, and all the family, will be here to-night, and is in a great hurry to speak with you.

Man. Where is he?

James. At our house, sir; he has been gaping and stumping about the streets in his dirty boots, and asking every one he meets, if they can tell him where

he may have a good lodging for a Parliament-man, till he can hire a handsome house, fit for all his family, for the winter.

Man. I am afraid, my lord, I must wait upon Mr. Moody.

Lord T. Pr'ythee let us have him here; he will divert us.

Man. Oh, my lord, he's such a cub! Not but he's so near common sense, that he passes for a wit in the family.

Lady G. I beg, of all things, we may have him: I am in love with nature, let her dress be never so homely.

Man. Then desire him to come hither, James.

[*Exit James.*]

Lady G. Pray what may be Mr. Moody's post?

Man. Oh! his *maitre d'hotel*, his butler, his bailiff, his hind, his huntsman, and sometimes—his companion.

Lord T. It runs in my head, that the moment this knight has set him down in the house, he will get up, to give them the earliest proof of what importance he is to the public, in his own country.

Man. Yes, and when they have heard him, he will find, that his utmost importance stands valued at—sometimes being invited to dinner.

Lady G. And her ladyship, I suppose, will make as considerable a figure in her sphere, too.

Man. That you may depend upon: for (if I don't mistake) she has ten times more of the jade in her than she yet knows of: and she will so improve in this rich soil in a month, that she will visit all the ladies that will let her into their houses, and run in debt to all the shopkeepers that will let her into their books; in short, before her important spouse has made five pounds by his eloquence at Westminster, she will have lost five hundred at dice and quadrille in the parish of St. James's.

Lord T. So that, by that time he is declared unduly elected, a swarm of duns will be ready for

their money; and his worship—will be ready for a gaol.

Man. Yes, yes, that I reckon will close the account of this hopeful journey to London—But see, here comes the fore-horse of the team.

Enter JOHN MOODY.

Oh, honest John!

J. Moody. Ad's waunds and heart, Measter Manly! I'm glad I ha' fun ye. Lawd, lawd, give me a buss! Why, that's friendly naw. Flesh! I thought we would never ha' got hither. Well, and how do you do, Measter?—Good lack! I beg pardon for my bawldness—I did not see 'at his honour was here.

Lord T. Mr. Moody, your servant: I am glad to see you in London: I hope all the good family is well.

J. Moody. Thanks be prais'd, your honour, they are all in pretty good heart; tho'f we have had a power of crosses upo' the road.

Lady G. I hope my lady has had no hurt, Mr. Moody.

J. Moody. Noa, and please your ladyship, she was never in better humour: there's money enough stirring now.

Man. What has been the matter, John?

J. Moody. Why, we came up in such a hurry, you mun think that our tackle was not so tight as it should be.

Man. Come, tell us all—Pray, how do they travel?

J. Moody. Why, i' the awld coach, Measter; and 'cause my lady loves to do things handsome, to be sure, she would have a couple of cart-horses clapt to the four old geldings, that neighbours might see she went up to London in her coach and six; and so Giles Joulter, the ploughman, rides postilion.

Man. Very well! The journey sets out as it should do. [*Aside.*] What, do they bring all the children with them too?

J. Moody. Noa, noa, only the younk 'squire, and

Miss Jenny. The other foive are all out at board, at half-a-crown a head, a week, with John Growse, at Smoke-dunghill farm.

Man. Good again! a right English academy for younger children!

J. Moody. Anon, sir. [*Not understanding him.*]

"*Lady G.* Poor souls! What will become of them?"

"*J. Moody.* Nay, nay, for that matter, madam, they are in very good hands: Joan loves 'um as tho' they were all her own: for she was wet-nurse to every mother's babe of 'um—Ay, ay, they'll ne'er want for a belly-full there!

"*Lady G.* What simplicity!

"*Man.* The Lud a' mercy upon all good folks! What work will these people make!

[*Holding up his hands.*"]

Lord T. And when do you expect them here, John?

J. Moody. Why, we were in hopes to ha' come yesterday, an' it had no' been that th' awld Weazlebelly horse tired: and then we were so cruelly loaden, that the two fore-wheels came crash down at once, in Waggon-rut lane, and there we lost four hours 'fore we could set things to rights again.

Man. So they bring all the baggage with the coach, then?

J. Moody. Ay, ay, and good store on it there is—Why, my lady's geer alone were as much fill'd four portmantel trunks, beside the great deal box that heavy Ralph and the monkey sit upon behind.

Lord T. Lady G. and Man. Ha, ha, ha!

Lady G. Well, Mr. Moody, and pray how many are there within the coach?

J. Moody. Why, there's my lady, and his worship, and the younk 'squire, and Miss Jenny, and the fat lapdog, and my lady's maid, Mrs. Handy, and Doll Tripe, the cook, that's all—Only Doll puked a little with riding backward; so they hoisted her into the coach-box, and then her stomach was easy.

Lady G. Oh, I see them! I see them go by me. Ha, ha!

[*Laughing.*]

J. Moody. Then you mun think, measter, there was some stowage for the belly, as well as the back too; children are apt to be famished upon the road; so we had such cargoes of plum-cake, and baskets of tongues, and biscuits, and cheese, and cold boiled beef—And then, in case of sickness, bottles of cherry brandy, plague water, sack, tent, and strong beer so plenty, as made th' awld coach crack again. Mercy upon them! and send them all well to town, I say.

Man. Ay, and well out on't again, John.

J. Moody. Ods bud, measter! you're a wise man; and for that matter, so am I—Whoam's whoam, I say: I am sure we ha' got but little good e'er sin' we turn'd our backs on't. Nothing but mischief! Some devil's trick or other plagued us aw' the day lung. Crack, goes one thing! bawnce, goes another! Woa! says Roger—Then, sowse! we are all set fast in a slough. Whaw, cries miss! Scream, go the maids! and bawl, just as thof' they were stuck. And so, mercy on us! this was the trade from morning to night. But my lady was in such a murrain haste to be here, that set out she would, thof' I told her it was Childermas day.

Man. These ladies, these ladies, John—

J. Moody. Ay, measter! I ha' seen a little of them: and I find that the best—when she's mended, won't ha' much much goodness to spare.

Lord T. Well said, John. Ha, ha!

Man. I hope, at least, you and your good woman agree still.

J. Moody. Ay, ay; much of a muchness. Bridget sticks to me: tho' as for her goodness—why, she was willing to come to London too—But hauld a bit! Noa, noa, says I; there may be mischief enough done without you.

Man. Why that was bravely spoken, John, and like a man.

J. Moody. Ah, weast heart! were measter but hawf the mou that I am—Ods wookers! thof' he'll speak

stautly too, sometimes——But then he canno' hawld it—no, he canno' hawld it.

Lord T. Lady G. and Man. Ha, ha, ha!

J. Moody. Ods flesh! but I mun hie me whoam; the coach will be coming every hour naw—but measter charged me to find your worship out: for he has hugey business with you: and will certainly wait upon you by that time he can put on a clean neck-cloth.

Man. Oh, John! I'll wait upon him.

J. Moody. Why you wonno' be so kind, wull ye?

Man. If you'll tell me where you lodge.

J. Moody. Just i' the street next to where your worship dwells, at the sign of the golden ball—It's gold all over; where they sell ribbons and flappits, and other sort of geer for gentlewomen.

Man. A milliner's?

J. Moody. Ay, ay, one Mrs. Motherly. Waunds, she has a couple of clever girls there, stitching i' th' fore-room.

Man. Yes, yes, she's a woman of good business, no doubt on't—Who recommended that house to you, John?

J. Moody. The greatest good fortune in the world, sure; for as I was gaping about the streets, who should look out at the window there, but the fine gentleman that was always riding by our coach-side at York races—Count—Basset; ay, that's he.

Man. Basset! Oh, I remember! I know him by sight.

J. Moody. Well, to be sure, as civil a gentleman to see to—

Man. As any sharper in town. [*Aside.*

J. Moody. At York, he used to breakfast with my lady every morning.

Man. Yes, yes, and I suppose her ladyship will return his compliment here in town. [*Aside.*

J. Moody. Well, measter—

Lord T. My service to sir Francis, and my lady, John.

Lady G. And mine, pray, Mr. Moody.

J. Moody. Ay, your honours; they'll be proud on't, I dare say.

Man. I'll bring my compliments myself: so, honest John—

J. Moody. Dear Measter Manly! the goodness of goodness bless and preserve you. [*Exit J. Moody.*]

Lord T. What a natural creature 'tis!

Lady G. Well, I can't but think John, in a wet afternoon in the country, must be very good company.

Lord T. Oh, the tramontane! If this were known at half the quadrille-tables in town, they would lay down their cards to laugh at you.

Lady G. And the minute they took them up again, they would do the same at the losers—But to let you see, that I think good company may sometimes want cards to keep them together; what think you, if we three sat soberly down to kill an hour at ombre?

Man. I shall be too hard for you, madam.

Lady G. No matter; I shall have as much advantage of my lord, as you have of me.

Lord T. Say you so, madam; have at you then. Here! get the ombre table, and cards.

[*Exit Lord Townly.*]

Lady G. Come, Mr. Manly—I know you don't forgive me now.

Man. I don't know whether I ought to forgive your thinking so, madam. Where do you imagine I could pass my time so agreeably?

Lady G. I'm sorry my lord is not here to take his share of the compliment—But he'll wonder what's become of us.

Man. I'll follow in a moment, madam—

[*Exit Lady Grace.*]

It must be so—She sees I love her—yet with what unoffending decency she avoids an explanation! How amiable is every hour of her conduct! What a vile opinion have I had of the whole sex for these ten years past, which this sensible creature has recovered in less

than one! Such a companion, sure, might compensate all the irksome disappointments that pride, folly, and falsehood, ever gave me!

*Could women regulate, like her, their lives,
What halcyon days were in the gift of wives!
Vain rovers, then, might envy what they hate;
And only fools would mock the married state.* [Exit.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Mrs. MOTHERLY's House. Enter Count BASSET and Mrs. MOTHERLY.

Count Basset. I TELL you there is not such a family in England for you, Do you think I would have gone out of your lodgings for any body that was not sure to make you easy, for the winter.

Moth. Nay, I see nothing against it sir, but the gentleman's being a parliament-man; and when people may, as it were, think one impertinent, or be out of humour, you know, when a body comes to ask for one's own——

Count Bas. Psha! Pr'ythee never trouble thy head his pay is as good as the bank—Why, he has above two thousand a-year.

Moth. Alas-a-day, that's nothing! your people of ten thousand a-year have ten thousand things to do with it.

Count Bas. Nay, if you are afraid of being out of your money, what do you think of going a little with me, Mrs. Motherly?

Moth. As how?

Count Bas. Why, I have a game in my hand, in which, if you'll croup me, that is, help me to play it, you shall go five hundred to nothing.

Moth. Say you so?—Why then I go, sir—and now, pray let's see your game.

Count Bas. Look you, in one word my cards lie thus—When I was down this summer at York,

I happened to lodge in the same house with this knight's lady that's now coming to lodge with you.

Moth. Did you so, sir?

Count Bas. And sometimes had the honour to breakfast, and pass an idle hour with her—

Moth. Very good; and here, I suppose, you would have the impudence to sup and be busy with her.

Count Bas. Psha! pr'ythee hear me.

Moth. Is this your game? I would not give six-pence for it. What! you have a passion for her pin-money—No, no, country ladies are not so flush of it!

Count Bas. Nay, if you won't have patience—

Moth. One had need to have a good deal, I am sure, to hear you talk at this rate. Is this your way of making my poor niece, Myrtila, easy?

Count Bas. Death! I shall do it still, if the woman will but let me speak—

Moth. Had you not a letter from her this morning?

Count Bas. I have it here in my pocket—this is it.

[*Shews it, and puts it up again.*]

Moth. Ay, but I don't find you have made any answer to it.

Count Bas. How the devil can I, if you won't hear me?

Moth. What hear you talk of another woman!

Count Bas. Oh, lud! Oh, lud! I tell you, I'll make her fortune—Ounds, I'll marry her!

Moth. A likely matter! if you would not do it when she was a maid, your stomach is not so sharp set now, I presume.

Count Bas. Hey-day! why your head begins to turn, my dear! The devil! you did not think I proposed to marry her myself.

Moth. If you don't, who the devil do you think will marry her?

Count Bas. Why, a fool—

Moth. Humph! there may be sense in that—

Count Bas. Very good—One for t'other, then; if I can help her to a husband, why should you not come into my scheme of helping me to a wife?

Moth. Your pardon, sir; ay, ay, in an honourable affair, you know you may command me—But pray, where is this blessed wife and husband to be had?

Count Bas. Now, have a little patience—You must know then, this country knight and his lady bring up in the coach with them their eldest son and a daughter, to teach them—to wash their faces, and turn their toes out.

Moth. Good—

Count Bas. The son is an unlick'd whelp, about sixteen, just taken from school; and begins to hanker after every wench in the family: the daughter, much of the same age; a pert, forward hussy, who, having eight thousand pounds left her by an old doting grandmother, seems to have a devilish mind to be doing in her way too.

Moth. And your design is to put her into business for life?

Count Bas. Look you, in short, *Mrs. Motherly*, we gentlemen, whose occasional chariots roll only upon the four aces, are liable, sometimes, you know, to have a wheel out of order; which, I confess, is so much my case at present, that my dapple greys are reduced to a pair of ambling chairmen. Now, if, with your assistance, I can whip up this young jade into a hackney-coach, I may chance, in a day or two after, to carry her, in my own chariot, *en famille*, to an opera. Now, what do you say to me?

Moth. Why, I shall not sleep for thinking of it. But how will you prevent the family smoaking your design?

Count Bas. By renewing my addresses to the mother.

Moth. And how will the daughter like that, think you?

Count Bas. Very well—whilst it covers her own affair.

Moth. That's true—it must do—but, as you say, one for t'other, sir; I stick to that—if you

don't do my niece's business with the son, I'll blow you with the daughter, depend upon't.

Count Bas. It's a bet—pay' as we go, I tell you; and the five hundred shall be staked in a third hand.

Moth. That's honest——But here comes my niece; shall we let her into the secret?

Count Bas. Time enough; may be I may touch upon it.

Enter MYRTILLA.

Moth. So niece, are all the rooms done out, and the beds sheeted?

Myr. Yes madam; but Mr. Moody tells us, the lady always burns wax in her own chamber, and we have none in the house.

Moth. Odso! then I must beg your pardon, Count; this is a busy time, you know. [*Exit Mrs. Motherly.*]

Count Bas. Myrtilla, how dost thou do, child?

Myr. As well as a losing gamester can.

Count Bas. Why, what have you lost?

Myr. What I shall never recover; and what's worse, you that have won it, don't seem to be much the better for it.

Count Bas. Why, child, dost thou ever see any body overjoyed for winning a deep stake six months after 'tis over.

Myr. Would I had never play'd for it!

Count Bas. Psha! hang these melancholy thoughts! we may be friends still.

Myr. Dull ones.

Count Bas. Useful ones, perhaps—suppose I should help thee to a good husband?

Myr. I suppose you'll think any one good enough, that will take me off o' your hands.

Count Bas. What do you think of the young country squire, the heir of the family that's coming to lodge here?

Myr. How should I know what to think of him?

Count Bas. Nay, I only give you the hint, child; it may be worth your while, at least to look about you—Hark! what bustle's that without?

Enter Mrs. MOTHERLY in haste.

Moth. Sir, sir! the gentleman's coach is at the door; they are all come.

Count Bas. What, already?

Moth. They are just getting out!—Won't you step and lead in my lady! Do you be in the way, niece; I must run and receive them.

[Exit Mrs. Motherly.]

Count Bas. And think of what I told you.

[Exit Count.]

Myr. Ay, ay; you have left me enough to think of as long as I live—A faithless fellow! I am sure I have been true to him; and for that only reason he wants to be rid of me. But while women are weak, men will be rogues; “and for a bane to both their joys and ours, when our vanity indulges them in such innocent favours as make them adore us, we can never be well, till we grant them the very one that puts an end to their devotion—But here comes my aunt and the company.”

Mrs. MOTHERLY returns, shewing in Lady WRONG-HEAD, led by Count BASSET.

Moth. If your ladyship pleases to walk into this parlour, madam, only for the present, 'till your servants have got all your things in.

Lady Wrang. Well, dear sir, this is so infinitely obliging—I protest it gives me pain, tho', to turn you out of your lodgings thus.

Count Bas. No trouble in the least, madam; we single fellows are soon moved; besides, Mrs. Motherly's my old acquaintance, and I could not be her hindrance.

Moth. The Count is so well bred, madam, I dare say he would do a great deal more to accommodate your ladyship.

Lady Wrang. Oh, dear madam!—A good, well-bred sort of a woman. *[Apart to the Count.]*

Count Bas. Oh, madam! she is very much among

people of quality; she is seldom without them in her house.

Lady Wrong. Are there a good many people of quality in this street, Mrs. Motherly?

Moth. Now your ladyship is here, madam, I don't believe there is a house without them.

Lady Wrong. I am mighty glad of that; for, really, I think people of quality should always live among one another.

Count Bas. 'Tis what one would choose, indeed, madam.

Lady Wrong. Bless me! but where are the children all this while?

Moth. Sir Francis, madam, I believe is taking care of them.

Sir Fran. [*Within.*] John Moody! stay you by the coach, and see all our things out—Come children.

Moth. Here they are, madam.

Enter Sir FRANCIS, 'Squire RICHARD, and Miss JENNY.

Sir Fran. Well, Count, I mun say it, this was koynd, indeed.

Count Bas. Sir Francis, give me leave to bid you welcome to London.

Sir Fran. Psha! how dost do, mon?—Waunds, I'm glad to see thee! A good sort of a house this.

Count Bas. Is not that Master Richard?

Sir Fran. Ey, ey, that's young Hopeful—Why dost not baw, Dick?

'Squ. Rich. So I do, feyther.

Count Bas. Sir, I'm glad to see you—I protest Mrs. Jane is grown so, I should not have known her.

Sir Fran. Come forward, Jenny.

Jenny. Sure, papa! do you think I don't know how to behave myself?

Count Bas. If I have permission to approach her, Sir Francis.

Jenny. Lord, sir! I'm in such a frightful pickle—
[*Salute.*]

Count Bas. Every dress that's proper must become you, madam—you have been a long journey.

Jenny. I hope you will see me in a better to-morrow, sir.

[*Lady Wronghead whispers Mrs. Motherly, pointing to Myrtilla.*

Moth. Only a niece of mine, madam, that lives with me: she will be proud to give your ladyship any assistance in her power.

Lady Wrong. A pretty sort of a young woman—Jenny, you two must be acquainted.

Jenny. Oh, mamma, I am never strange in a strange place. [*Salutes Myrtilla.*

Myr. You do me a great deal of honour, madam—Madam, your ladyship's welcome to London.

Jenny. Mamma, I like her prodigiously; she called me my ladyship.

'Squ. Rich. Pray, mother, may'nt I be acquainted with her too?

Lady Wrong. You, you clown! stay 'till you learn a little more breeding first.

Sir Fran. Od's heart, my Lady Wronghead! why do you baulk the lad? How should he ever learn breeding, if he does not put himself forward!

'Squ. Rich. Why, ay, seyther, does mother think 'at I'd be uncivil to her?

Myr. Master has so much good humour, madam, he would soon gain upon any body.

[*He kisses Myrtilla.*

'Squ Rich. Lo' you there, mother; and you would but be quiet, she and I should do well enough.

Lady Wrong. Why, how now, sirrah! boys must not be familiar.

'Squ. Rich. Why, an' I know nobody, how the murrain mun I pass my time here, in a strange place? Naw you and I, and sister, forsooth, sometimes, in an afternoon, may play at one and thirty bone-ace, purely.

Jenny. Speak for yourself, sir; d'ye think I play at such clownish games?

'*Squ. Rich.* Why, and you woant, yo' ma' let it aloane! then she and I, mayhap, will have a bawt at all-fours, without you.

Sir Fran. Noa, noa, Dick, that won't do neither; you mun learn to make one at ombre, here, child.

Myr. If master pleases, I'll shew him.

'*Squ. Rich.* What! the Humber! Hoy day! why does our river run to this tawn, feyther?

Sir Fran. Pooh! you silly tony! ombre is a gearm at cards, that the better sort of people play three together at.

'*Squ. Rich.* Nay, the moare the merrier, I say; but sister is always so cross-grain'd—

Jenny. Lord! this boy is enough to deaf people—and one has really been stuff'd up in a coach so long, thaj—Pray, madam—could not I get a little powder for my hair?

Myr. If you please to come along with me, madam.

[*Exeunt Myr. and Jenny.*]

'*Squ. Rich.* What, has sister taken her away, naw! mess, I'll go and have a little game with 'em.

[*Exit after them.*]

Lady Wrong. Well, Count, I hope you won't so far change your lodgings, but you will come, and be at home here sometimes?

Sir Fran. Ay! ay! pr'ythee come and take a bit of mutton with us, naw and tan, when thouh'st naught to do.

Count Bas. Well, Sir Francis, you shall find I'll make but very little ceremony.

Sir Fran. Why, ay now, that's hearty!

Moth. Will your ladyship please to refresh yourself with a dish of tea, after your fatigue? I think I have pretty good.

Lady Wrong. If you please, Mrs. Motherly; but I believe we had best have it above stairs.

Moth. Very well, madam: it shall be ready immediately.

[*Exit Mrs. Motherly.*]

Lady Wrong. Won't you walk up, sir?

Sir Fran. Moody!

Count Bas. Shan't we stay for sir Francis, madam?

Lady Wrong. Lard! don't mind him: he will come if he likes it.

Sir Fran. Ay! ay! ne'er heed me—I have things to look after. [*Exeunt Lady Wrong. and Count Bas.*]

Enter JOHN MOODY.

J. Moody. Did your worship want muh?

Sir Fran. Aye, is the coach cleared, and all our things in?

J. Moody. Aw but a few bandboxes, and the nook that's left o' the goose poy—But a plague on him, th' monkey has gin us the slip, I think—I suppose he's goon to see his relations; for here looks to be a power of um in this tawn—but heavy Ralph is skawered after him.

Sir Fran. Why, let him go to the devil! no matter, and the hawnds had had him a month agoe—but I wish the coach and horses had got safe to the inn! This is a sharp tawn, we mun look about us, here, John; therefore I would have you go along with Roger, and see that nobody runs away with them before they get to the stable.

J. Moody. Alas-a-day, sir, I believe our awld cattle won't yeasly be run away with to-night—but howsomever, we'st ta' the best care we can of 'um, poor sawls.

Sir Fran. Well, well! make haste—

[*Moody goes out and returns.*]

J. Moody. Ods flesh! here's Master Manly come to wait upo' your worship,

Sir Fran. Where is he?

J. Moody. Just coming in at threshold.

Sir Fran. Then goa about your business.

[*Exit Moody.*]

Enter MANLY.

Cousin Manly! Sir, I am your very humble servant.

Man. I heard you were come, sir Francis—and—

Sir Fran. Odsheart! this was kindly done of you naw,

Man. I wish you may think it so, cousin! for I confess, I should have been better pleased to have seen you in any other place.

Sir Fran. How soa, sir?

Man. Nay, 'tis for your own sake; I'm not concerned.

Sir Fran. Look you, cousin; thof I know you wish me well; yet I don't question I shall give you such weighty reasons for what I have done, that you will say, sir, this is the wisest journey that ever I made in my life.

Man. I think it ought to be, cousin; for I believe you will find it the most expensive one—your election did not cost you a trifle, I suppose.

Sir Fran. Why ay! it's true! That—that did lick a little; but if a man's wise (and I han't fawn'd yet that I'm a fool), there are ways, cousin, to lick one's self whole again.

Man. Nay, if you have that secret—

Sir Fran. Don't you be fearful, cousin—you'll find that I know something.

Man. If it be any thing for your good, I should be glad to know it too.

Sir Fran. In short, then, I have a friend in a corner, that has let me a little into what's what, at Westminster—that's one thing.

Man. Very well! but what good is that to do you?

Sir Fran. Why not me, as much as it does other folks?

Man. Other people, I doubt, have the advantage of different qualifications.

Sir Fran. Why, aye! there's it naw! you'll say that I have lived all my days i' the country—what then—I'm o' the quorum—I have been at sessions, and I have made speeches there! aye, and at vestry too—and mayhap they may find here—that I have brought my tongue up to town with me! D'ye take me naw?

Man. If I take your case right, cousin, I am afraid the first occasion you will have for your eloquence

here, will be, to shew that you have any right to make use of it at all.

Sir Fran. How d'ye mean?

Man. That sir John Worthland has lodged a petition against you.

Sir Fran. Petition! why, ay! there let it lie—we'll find a way to deal with that, I warrant you!—Why, you forget, cousin, sir John's o' the wrung side, mon!

Man. I doubt, sir Francis, that will do you but little service; for in cases very notorious, which I take yours to be, there is such a thing as a short day, and dispatching them immediately.

Sir Fran. With all my heart! the sooner I send him home again, the better.

Man. And this is the scheme you have laid down to repair your fortune?

Sir Fran. In one word, consin, I think it my duty! The Wrongheads have been a considerable family ever since England was England: and since the world knows I have talents wherewithal, they shan't say it's my fault, if I don't make as good a figure as any that ever were at the head on't.

Man. Nay, this project, as you have laid it, will come up to any thing your ancestors have done these five hundred years.

Sir Fran. And let me alone to work it: mayhap I hav'n't told you all, neither—

Man. You astonish me! what? and is it full as practicable as what you have told me?

Sir Fran. Ay, tho' I say it—every whit, cousin. You'll find that I have more irons i' the fire than one; I doan't come of a fool's errand!

Man. Very well,

Sir Fran. In a word, my wife has got a friend at court, as well as myself, and her dowghter Jenny is naw pretty well grown up—

Man. [*Aside.*—And what, in the devil's name, would he do with the dowdy?

Sir Fran. Naw, if I doan't lay in for a husband

for her, mayhap, i' this tawn, she may be looking out for herself.

Man. Not unlikely,

Sir Fran. Therefore I have some thoughts of getting her to be maid of honour.

Man. [*Aside.*]—Oh! he has taken my breath away; but I must hear him out—Pray, sir Francis, do you think her education has yet qualified her for a court?

Sir Fran. Why, the girl is a little too mettlesome, it's true; but she has tongue enough: she woan't be dash't! Then she shall learn to daunce forthwith, and that will soon teach her how to stond still you know.

Man. Very well; but when she is thus accomplish'd, you must still wait for a vacancy.

Sir Fran. Why, I hope one has a good chance for that every day, cousin; for if I take it right, that's a post, that folks are not more willing to get into, than they are to get out of—It's like an orange-tree, upon that accawnt—it will bear blossoms, and fruit that's ready to drop, at the same time.

Man. Well, sir, you best know how to make good your pretensions! But, pray, where is my lady, and my young cousin? I should be glad to see them too.

Sir Fran. She is but just taking a dish of tea with the Count, and my landlady—I'll call her dawn.

Man. No, no, if she's engaged, I shall call again.

Sir Fran. Odsheart! but you mun see her naw, cousin; what! the best friend I have in the world!—Here, sweetheart! [*To a servant without.*] pr'ythee, desire my lady and the gentleman to come dawn a bit; tell her here's cousin Manly come to wait upon her.

Man. Pray, sir, who may the gentleman be?

Sir Fran. You mun know him to be sure; why it's Count Basset.

Man. Oh! is it he?—Your family will be infinitely happy in his acquaintance.

Sir Fran. Troth! I think so too: he's the civillest man that ever I knew in my life—Why, here he would go out of his own lodgings, at an hour's warning,

purely to oblige my family. Wasn't that kind, naw?

Man. Extremely civil—the family is in admirable hands already. [*Aside.*

Sir Fran. Then my lady likes him hugely—all the time of York races, she would never be without him!

Man. That was happy, indeed! and a prudent man, you know, should always take care that his wife may have innocent company.

Sir Fran. Why, aye! that's it! and I think there could not be such another!

Man. Why, truly, for her purpose, I think not.

Sir Fran. Only naw and tan, he—he stonds a leetle too much upon ceremony; that's his fault.

Man. Oh, never fear! he'll mend that every day—
Mercy on us! what a head he has! [*Aside.*

Sir Fran. So, here they come!

Enter Lady WRONGHEAD, Count BASSET, and Mrs. MOTHERLY.

Lady Wrong. Cousin Manly, this is infinitely obliging; I am extremely glad to see you.

Man. Your most obedient servant, madam; I am glad to see your ladyship look so well, after your journey.

Lady Wrong. Why, really, coming to London is apt to put a little more life in one's looks.

Man. Yet the way of living, here, is very apt to deaden the complexion—and, give me leave to tell you, as a friend, madam, you are come to the worst place in the world for a good woman to grow better in.

Lady Wrong. Lord, cousin! how should people ever make any figure in life, that are always inoaped up in the country.

Count Bas. Your ladyship certainly takes the thing in quite a right light, madam. Mr. Manly, your humble servant—a hem.

Man. Familiar puppy. [*Aside.*] Sir, your most obedient—I must be civil to the rascal, to cover my suspicion of him. [*Aside.*

Count Bas. Was you at White's this morning, sir?

Man. Yes, sir, I just called in.

Count Bas. Pray—what—was there any thing done there?

Man. Much as usual, sir; the same daily carcasses, and the same crows about them.

Count Bas. The Demoivre-Baronet had a bloody tumble yesterday.

Man. I hope, sir, you had your share of him.

Count Bas. No faith; I came in when it was all over—I think I just made a couple of bets with him, took up a cool hundred, and so went to the King's Arms.

Lady Wrong. What a genteel easy manner he has!

[*Aside.*

Man. A very hopeful acquaintance I have made here.

[*Aside.*

Enter 'Squire RICHARD, with a wet brown paper on his face.

Sir Fran. How naw, Dick; what's the matter with thy forehead, lad?

'Squ. Rich. I ha' gotten a knock upon't.

Lady Wrong. And how did you come by it, you heedless creature?

'Squ. Rich. Why, I was but running after sister, and t'other young woman, into a little room just naw: and so with that they 'slapp'd the door full in my face, and gave me such a whurr here—I thought they had beaten my brains out; so I got a dab of wet brown paper here, to swage it a while.

Lady Wrong. They served you right enough; will you never have done with your horse-play?

Sir Fran. Pooh, never heed it, lad; it will be well by to-morrow—the boy has a strong head.

Man. Yes, truly, his skull seems to be of a comfortable thickness.

[*Aside.*

Sir Fran. Come, Dick, here's cousin Manly—sir, this is your god-son.

'Squ. Rich. Honour'd godfeyther, I crave leave to ask your blessing.

Man. Thou hast it, child—and if it will do thee any good, may it be to make thee, at least, as wise a man as thy father.

Enter Miss JENNY.

Lady Wrong. Oh, here's my daughter too. Miss Jenny! don't you see your cousin, child?

Man. And as for thee, my pretty dear—[*Salutes her.*] may'st thou be, at least, as good a woman as thy mother.

Jenny. I wish I may ever be so handsome, sir.

Man. Hah, Miss Pert! Now that's a thought that seems to have been hatcht in the girl on this side Highgate. [*Aside.*

Sir Fran. Her tongue is a little nimble, sir.

Lady Wrong. That's only from her country education, sir Francis. You know she has been kept too long there—so I brought her to London, sir, to learn a little more reserve and modesty.

Man. Oh, the best place in the world for it—every woman she meets will teach her something of it—There's the good gentlewoman of the house looks like a knowing person; even she perhaps will be so good as to shew her a little London behaviour.

Moth. Alas, sir, Miss wont stand long in need of my instructions.

Man. That I dare say. What thou can't teach her she will soon be mistress of. [*Aside.*

Moth. If she does, sir, they shall always be at her service.

Lady Wrong. Very obliging, indeed, Mrs. Motherly.

Sir Fran. Very kind and civil truly—I think we are got into a mighty good hawse here.

Man. Oh, yes, and very friendly company.

Count Bas. Humph! I gad I don't like his looks—he seems a little smoky—I believe I had as good brush off—If I stay, I don't know but he may ask me some odd questions.

Man. Well, sir, I believe you and I do but hinder the family—

Count Bas. It's very true, sir—I was just thinking of going—He don't care to leave me, I see: but it's no matter, we have time enough. [*Aside.*] And so, ladies, without ceremony, your humble servant.

[*Exit Count Basset, and drops a letter.*]

Lady Wrong. Ha! what paper's this? Some billet-doux, I'll lay my life; but this is no place to examine it.

[*Puts it in her pocket.*]

Sir Fran. Why in such haste, cousin?

Man. Oh, my lady must have a great many affairs upon her hands, after such a journey.

Lady Wrong. I believe, sir, I shall not have much less every day, while I stay in this town, of one sort or other.

Man. Why truly, ladies seldom want employment here, madam.

Jenny. And mamma did not come to it to be idle, sir.

Man. Nor you neither, I dare say, my young mistress.

Jenny. I hope not, sir.

Man. Ha, Miss Mettle!—Where are you going, sir?

Sir Fran. Only to see you to the door, sir.

Man. Oh, sir Francis, I love to come and go without ceremony.

Sir Fran. Nay, sir, I must do as you will have me—your humble servant.

[*Exit Manly.*]

Jenny. This cousin Manly, papa, seems to be but of an odd sort of a crusty humour—I don't like him half so well as the count.

Sir Fran. Pooh! that's another thing, child—Cousin is a little proud indeed; but however you must always be civil to him, for he has a deal of money, and nobody knows who he may give it to.

Lady Wrong. Psha! a fig for his money; you have so many projects of late about money, since you are a parliament man. What, we must make ourselves slaves to his impertinent humours, eight or ten years perhaps, in hopes to be his heirs, and then he will be just old enough to marry his maid.

Moth. Nay, for that matter, madam, the town says he is going to be married already.

Sir Fran. Who! cousin Manly?

Lady Wrong. To whom, pray?

Moth. Why, is it possible your ladyship should know nothing of it?—to my Lord Townly's sister, Lady Grace.

Lady Wrong. Lady Grace!

Moth. Dear madam, it has been in the newspapers!

Lady Wrong. I don't like that, neither.

Sir Fran. Naw, I do; for then it's likely it mayn't be true.

Lady Wrong. [*Aside.*] If it is not too far gone: at least it may be worth one's while to throw a rub in his way.

Squ. Rich. Pray, feyther, haw lung will it be to supper?

Sir Fran. Odso! that's true; step to the cook, lad, and ask what she can get us.

Moth. If you please, sir, I'll order one of my maids to shew her where she may have any thing you have a mind to.

Sir Fran. Thank you kindly, Mrs. Motherly.

Squ. Rich. Ods-flesh! what is not it i' the hawse yet—I shall be famish'd—but hawld! I'll go and ask Doll, an there's none o' the goose poy left.

Sir Fran. Do so, and do'st hear, Dick—see if there's e'er a bottle o' the strong beer that came i' th' coach with us—if there be, clap a toast in it, and bring it up.

Squ. Rich. With a little nutmeg and sugar, shawn't I, feyther.

Sir Fran. Ay, ay, as thee and I always drink it for breakfast—Go thy ways!—and I'll fill a pipe i' th' mean while.

[*Takes one from a pocket-case, and fills it.* Exit Squire Richard.

Lady Wrong. This boy is always thinking of his belly.

" *Sir Fran.* Why, my dear, you may allow him
" to be a little hungry after his journey.

" *Lady Wrong.* Nay, ev'n breed him your own
" way—He has been cramming in or out of the coach
" all this day, I am sure—I wish my poor girl could
" eat a quarter as much.

" *Jenny.* Oh, as for that I could eat a great deal
" more, mamma; but, then, mayhap, I should grow
" coarse, like him, and spoil my shape.

" *Lady Wrong.* Ay, so thou wouldst, my dear.

" *Enter 'Squire RICHARD, with a full tankard.*

" *Squ. Rich.* Here, seyther, I ha' brougth it—it's
" well I went as I did; for our Doll had just baked
" a toast, and was going to drink it herself.

" *Sir Fran.* Why then, here's to thee, Dick! [*Drinks.*]

" *'Squ. Rich.* 'Thonk you, seyther.

" *Lady Wrong.* Lord, sir Francis, I wonder you
" can encourage the boy to swill so much of that
" lubberly liquor—it's enough to make him quite
" stupid.

" *'Squ. Rich.* Why it never hurts me, mother;
" and I sleep like a hawnd after it. [*Drinks.*]

" *Sir Fran.* I am sure I ha' drunk it these thirty
" years, and by your leave, madam, I don't know
" that I want wit: ha! ha!

" *Jenny.* But you might have had a great deal
" more, papa, if you would have been governed by
" my mother.

" *Sir Fran.* Daughter, he that is governed by his
" wife has no wit at all.

" *Jenny.* Then I hope I shall marry a fool, sir;
" for I love to govern dearly.

" *Sir Fran.* You are too pert, child, it don't do
" well in a young woman.

" *Lady Wrong.* Pray, sir Francis, don't snub her;
" she has a fine growing spirit, and if you check her
" so, you will make her as dull as her brother there.

" *Squ. Rich.* [*After a long draught.*] Indeed, mo-
" ther, I think my sister is too forward.

" *Jenny.* You! you think I'm too forward! sure,

brother mind! your head's too heavy to think of any thing but your belly.

"*Lady Wrong.* Well said, miss, he's none of your master, though he is your elder brother.

"*'Squ. Rich.* No, nor she shawn't be my mistress, while's she's younger sister.

"*Sir Fran.* Well said, Dick! shew 'em that stawt liquor makes a stawt heart, lad!

"*'Squ. Rich.* So I will; and I'll drink ageen, for all her. [Drinks."

Enter JOHN MOODY.

Sir Fran. So, John, how are the horses?

J. Moody. Troth, sir, I ha' noa good opinion o' this tawn, it's made up o' mischief, I think.

Sir Fran. What's the matter naw?

J. Moody. Why, I'll tell your worship—before we were gotten to th' street end, with the coach, here, a great luggerheaded cart, with wheels as thick as a brick-wall, laid hawld on't, and has poo'd it aw to bits; crack, went the perch! down goes the coach! and whang says the glasses, all to shievers! Marcy upon us! and this be London, would we were aw weel in the country ageen!

Jenny. What have you to do, to wish us all in the country again, Mr. Lubber? I hope we shall not go into the country again these seven years, mamma; let twenty coaches be pulled to pieces.

Sir Fran. Hold your tongue, Jenny!—Was Roger in no fault in all this?

J. Moody. Noa, sir, nor I, noather. Are not yow ashamed, says Roger to the carter, to do such an unkind thing by strangers? Noa, says he, you bumkin. Sir, he did the thing on very purpose; and so the folks said that stood by—Very well, says Roger, yow shall see what our meyster will say to ye! Your meyster! says he; your meyster may kiss my—and so he clapped his hand just there, and like your worship. Flesh! I thought they had better breeding in this town.

Sir Fran. I'll teach this rascal some, I'll warrant

him! Odsbud! if I take him in hand, I'll play the devil with him.

'*Squ. Rich.* Ay do, feyther; have him before the parliament.

Sir Fran. Odsbud! and so I will—I will make him know who I am! Where does he live?

J. Moody. I believe in London, sir.

Sir Fran. What's the rascal's name?

J. Moody. I think I heard somebody call him Dick.

'*Squ. Rich.* What, my name!

Sir Fran. Where did he go?

J. Moody. Sir, he went home.

Sir Fran. Where's that?

J. Moody. By my troth, sir, I doan't know! I heard him say he would cross the same street again to-morrow; and if we had a mind to stand in his way, he would pooll us over and over again.

Sir Fran. Will he so? Odzooks! get me a constable.

Lady Wrong. Pooh! get you a good supper. Come, Sir Francis, don't put yourself in a heat for what can't be help'd. Accidents will happen to people that travel abroad to see the world—for my part I think it's a mercy it was not overturned before we were all out on't.

Sir Fran. Why ay, that's true again, my dear.

Lady Wrong. Therefore see to-morrow if we can buy one at second-hand, for present use; so bespeak a new one, and then all's easy.

J. Moody. Why, troth, sir, I doan't think this could have held you above a day longer.

Sir Fran. D'ye think so, John?

J. Moody. Why you ha' had it ever since your worship were high sheriff.

Sir Fran. Why then go and see what Doll has got us for supper—and come and get off my boots.

[*Exit Sir Fran.*

Lady Wrong. In the mean time, miss, do you step to Handy, and bid her get me some fresh night-clothes.

[*Exit Lady Wrong.*

Jenny. Yes, mamma, and some for myself too.

[*Exit Jenny.*]

Squ. Rich. Ods-flesh! and what mun I do all alone?
I'll e'en seek out where t'other pratty miss is,
And she and I'll go play at cards for kisses. [*Exit.*]

ACT III. SCENE I.

Lord TOWNLY's House. Enter Lord TOWNLY, a
Servant attending.

Lord Townly. WHO's there?

Serv. My lord.

Lord T. Bid them get dinner—Lady Grace, your servant.

Enter Lady GRACE.

Lady G. What, is the house up already? My lady is not drest yet.

Lord T. No matter—it's three o'clock—she may break my rest, but she shall not alter my hours.

Lady G. Nay, you need not fear that now, for she dines abroad.

Lord T. That, I suppose is only an excuse for her not being ready yet.

Lady G. No, upon my word, she is engaged in company.

Lord T. Where, pray?

Lady G. At my Lady Revel's; and you know they never dine till supper-time.

Lord T. No, truly—she is one of those orderly ladies, who never let the sun shine upon any of their vices!—But prithee, sister, what humour is she in to-day?

Lady G. Oh, in tip-top spirits, I can assure you—she won a good deal last night.

Lord T. I know no difference between her winning or losing, while she continues her course of life.

Lady G. However, she is better in good humour than bad.

Lord T. Much alike: when she is in good humour,

other people only are the better for it; when in a very ill humour, then indeed I seldom fail to have my share of her.

Lady G. Well we won't talk of that now—Does any body dine here?

Lord T. Manly promised me—By the way, madam, what do you think of his last conversation?

Lady G. I am a little at a stand about it.

Lord T. How so?

Lady G. Why—I don't know how he can ever have any thoughts of me, that could lay down such severe rules upon wives in my hearing.

Lord T. Did you think his rules unreasonable?

Lady G. I can't say I did; but he might have had a little more complaisance before me, at least.

Lord T. Complaisance is only a proof of good breeding: but his plainness was a certain proof of his honesty; nay, of his good opinion of you; for he would never have opened himself so freely, but in confidence that your good sense would not be obliged at it.

Lady G. My good opinion of him, brother, has hitherto been guided by yours: but I have received a letter this morning, that shews him a very different man from what I thought him.

Lord T. A letter! from whom?

Lady G. That I don't know; but there it is.

[*Gives a letter.*]

Lord T. Pray, let's see [*Reads.*] 'The inclosed, madam, fell accidentally into my hands; if it no way concerns you, you will only have the trouble of reading this, from your sincere friend, and humble servant, Unknown, &c.'

Lady G. And this was the inclosed. [*Gives another.*]

Lord T. [*Reads.*]

'To Charles Manly Esq.'

'Your manner of living with me of late, convinces me that I now grow as painful to you as to myself: but however, though you can love me no longer, I hope you will not let me live worse than I did,

' before I left an honest income, for the vain hopes of
' being ever yours. MYRTILLA DUPE.'

' P. S. 'Tis above four months since I received
' a shilling from you.'

Lady G. What think you now?

Lord T. I am considering——

Lady G. You see it's directed to him——

Lord T. That's true; but the postscript seems to be
a reproach that I think he is not capable of deserv-
ing.

Lady G. But who could have concern enough to
send it to me?

Lord T. I have observed that these sort of letters
from unknown friends generally come from secret
enemies.

Lady G. What would you have me do in it?

Lord T. What I think you ought to do—fairly shew
it to him, and say I advised you to it.

Lady G. Will not that have a very odd look from
me?

Lord T. Not at all, if you use my name in it; if he
is innocent, his impatience to appear so will discover
his regard to you. If he is guilty, it will be the best
way of preventing his addresses.

Lady G. But what pretence have I to put him out
of countenance?

Lord T. I can't think there's any fear of that.

Lady G. Pray, what is it you do think then?

Lord T. Why, certainly, that it's much more pro-
bable this letter may be all an artifice, than that he
is in the least concerned in it—

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Mr. Manly, my lord.

Lord T. Do you receive him, while I step a mi-
nute in to my lady. [*Exit Lord Townly.*]

Enter MANLY.

Man. Madam, your most obedient; they told me
my lord was here.

Lady G. He will be here presently; he is but just
gone in to my sister.

Man. So, then my lady dines with us.

Lady G. No; she is engaged.

Man. I hope you are not of her party, madam.

Lady G. Not till after dinner.

Man. And, pray, how may she have disposed of the rest of the day?

Lady G. Much as usual; she has visits till about eight; after that, till court time, she is to be at quadrille, at Mrs. Idle's; after the drawing-room she takes a short supper with my lady Moonlight. And from thence they go together to my lord Noble's assembly.

Man. And are you to do all this with her, madam?

Lady G. Only a few of the visits: I would, indeed, have drawn her to the play; but I doubt we have so much upon our hands, that it will not be practicable.

Man. But how can you forbear all the rest of it?

Lady G. There's no great merit in forbearing what one is not charmed with.

Man. And yet I have found that very difficult in my time.

Lady G. How do you mean?

Man. Why, I have passed a great deal of my life in the hurry of the ladies, though I was generally better pleased when I was at quiet without them.

Lady G. What induced you then to be with them?

Man. Idleness, and the fashion.

Lady G. No mistresses in the case?

Man. To speak honestly,—yes—Being often in the toy-shop, there was no forbearing the baubles.

Lady G. And of course, I suppose, sometimes you were tempted to pay for them twice as much as they were worth.

“*Man.* Why, really, where fancy only makes the
“choice, madam, no wonder if we are generally bubbled in those sort of bargains; which, I confess,
“has been often my case: for I had constantly some
“coquette or other upon my hands, whom I could

“ love, perhaps, just enough to put it in her power
“ to plague me.

“ *Lady G.* And that's a power, I doubt, commonly
“ made use of.

“ *Man.* The amours of a coquette, madam, seldom
“ have any other view; I look upon them and prudes
“ to be nuisances just alike, though they seem very
“ different: the first are always plaguing the men,
“ and the others are always abusing the women.

“ *Lady G.* And yet both of them do it for the
“ same vain ends; to establish a false character of
“ being virtuous.

“ *Man.* Of being chaste, they mean; for they know
“ no other virtue; and, upon the credit of that, they
“ traffic in every thing else that's vicious. They (even
“ against nature) keep their chastity, only because
“ they find they have more power to do mischief
“ with it, than they could possibly put in practice
“ without it.

“ *Lady G.* Hold, Mr. Manly: I am afraid this se-
“ vere opinion of the sex is owing to the ill-choice
“ you have made of your mistresses.

“ *Man.* In a great measure it may be so; but ma-
“ dam, if both these characters are so odious, how
“ vastly valuable is that woman, who has attained all
“ they aim at, without the aid of the folly or vice
“ of either!

“ *Lady G.* I believe those sort of women to be as
“ scarce, sir, as the men that believe there are any
“ such; or that, allowing such, have virtue enough
“ to deserve them.

“ *Man.* That could deserve them, then——had
“ been a more favourable reflection.

Lady G. Nay, I speak only from my little expe-
rience; for (I'll be free with you, Mr. Manly) I don't
know a man in the world that, in appearance, might
better pretend to a woman of the first merit than your-
self: and yet I have a reason in my hand, here, to
think you have your failings.

Man. I have infinite, madam; but I am sure the

want of an implicit respect for you is not among the number—Pray, what is in your hand, madam?

Lady G. Nay, sir, I have no title to it, for the direction is to you. *[Gives him a letter.]*

Man. To me! I don't remember the hand.

[Reads to himself.]

Lady G. I can't perceive any change of guilt in him; and his surprise seems natural. *[Aside.]*—Give me leave to tell you one thing by the way, Mr. Manly; that I should never have shewn you this, but that my brother enjoined me to it.

Man. I take that to proceed from my lord's good opinion of me, madam.

Lady G. I hope, at least, it will stand as an excuse for my taking this liberty.

Man. I never yet saw you do any thing, madam, that wanted an excuse; and I hope you will not give me an instance to the contrary, by refusing the favour I am going to ask you.

Lady G. I don't believe I shall refuse any that you think proper to ask.

Man. Only this, madam, to indulge me so far as to let me know how this letter came into your hands.

Lady G. Inclosed to me in this, without a name.

Man. If there be no secret in the contents, madam—

Lady G. Why—there's an impertinent insinuation in it; but as I know your good sense will think it so too, I will venture to trust you.

Man. You'll oblige me, madam.

[He takes the other letter, and reads.]

Lady G. *[Aside.]* Now am I in the oddest situation; methinks our conversation grows terribly critical. This must produce something—Oh, lud! would it were over.

Man. Now, madam, I begin to have some light into the poor project that is at the bottom of all this.

Lady G. I have no notion of what could be proposed by it.

Man. A little patience, madam—First, as to the insinuation you mention—

Lady G. O! what is he going to say now? [*Aside.*]

Man. Though my intimacy with my lord may have allowed my visits to have been very frequent here of late; yet, in such a talking town as this you must not wonder if a great many of those visits are placed to your account: and this taken for granted, I suppose, has been told to my lady Wronghead, as a piece of news, since her arrival, not improbably with many more imaginary circumstances.

Lady G. My lady Wronghead!

Man. Ay, madam; for I am positive this is her hand.

Lady G. What view could she have in writing it?

Man. To interrupt any treaty of marriage she may have heard I am engaged in; because, if I die without heirs, her family expects that some part of my estate may return to them again. But I hope she is so far mistaken, that if this letter has given you the least uneasiness—I shall think that the happiest moment of my life.

Lady G. That does not carry your usual complaisance, Mr. Manly!

Man. Yes, madam, because I am sure I can convince you of my innocence.

Lady G. I am sure I have no right to enquire into it.

Man. Suppose you may not, madam; yet you may very innocently have so much curiosity.

Lady G. With what an artful gentleness he steals into my opinion! [*Aside.*] Well, sir, I won't pretend to have so little of the woman in me, as to want curiosity—But, pray, do you suppose, then, this Myrtilla is a real, or a fictitious name?

Man. Now I recollect, madam, there is a young woman in the house where my Lady Wronghead lodges, that I heard somebody call Myrtilla: this letter may be written by her—But how it came directed to me, I confess, is a mystery, that, before I ever presume to see your ladyship again, I think myself obliged in honour to find out. [*Going.*]

Lady G. Mr. Manly—you are not going?

Man. 'Tis but to the next street, madam; I shall be back in ten minutes.

Lady G. Nay, but dinner's just coming up.

Man. Madam, I can neither eat nor rest till I see an end of this affair.

Lady G. But this is so odd! why should any silly curiosity of mine drive you away?

Man. Since you won't suffer it to be yours, madam; then it shall be only to satisfy my own curiosity—

[Exit Manly.]

Lady G. Well—and now, what am I to think of all this? Or suppose an indifferent person had heard every word we have said to one another, what would they have thought on't? Would it have been very absurd to conclude, he is seriously inclined to pass the rest of his life with me?—I hope not—for I am sure the case is terribly clear on my side; and why may not I, without vanity, suppose my—unaccountable somewhat—has done as much execution upon him?—Why—because he never told me so—nay, he has not so much as mentioned the word love, or ever said one civil thing to my person—well—but he has said a thousand to my good opinion, and has certainly got it—had he spoke first to my person, he had paid a very ill compliment to my understanding—I should have thought him impertinent, and never have troubled my head about him; but as he has managed the matter, at least I am sure of one thing, that let his thoughts be what they will, I shall never trouble my head about any other man as long as I live.

Enter Mrs. TRUSTY.

Well, Mrs. Trusty, is my sister dressed yet?

Trusty. Yes, madam; but my lord has been courting her so, I think, till they are both out of humour.

Lady G. How so?

Trusty. Why, it began, madam, with his lordship's desiring her ladyship to dine at home to day—upon which my lady said she could not be ready; upon that my lord ordered them to stay the dinner; and then my lady ordered the coach: then my lord took

her short, and said he had ordered the coachman to set up; then my lady made him a great curtsey, and said she would wait till his lordship's horses had dined, and was mighty pleasant: but, for fear of the worst, madam, she whispered me—to get her chair ready.

[*Exit Trusty.*]

Lady G. Oh, here they come! and, by their looks, seem a little unfit for company. [*Exit Lady Grace.*]

Enter Lady TOWNLY, Lord TOWNLY following.

Lady T. Well, look you, my lord, I can bear it no longer; nothing still but about my faults, my faults: an agreeable subject, truly!

Lord T. Why, madam, if you won't hear of them, how can I ever hope to see you mend them?

Lady T. Why, I don't intend to mend them—I can't mend them—you know I have tried to do it a hundred times—and—it hurts me so—I can't bear it.

Lord T. And I, madam, can't bear this daily licentious abuse of your time and character.

Lady T. Abuse! astonishing! when the universe knows, I am never in better company than when I am doing what I have a mind to. But to see this world! that men can never get over that silly spirit of contradiction—Why, but last Thursday, now—there you wisely amended one of my faults, as you call them—you insisted upon my not going to the masquerade—and pray, what was the consequence? Was not I as cross as the devil all the night after? Was not I forced to get company at home? And was it not almost three o'clock in the morning before I was able to come to myself again? And then the fault is not mended neither—for next time I shall only have twice the inclination to go: so that all this mending, and mending, you see, is but darning an old ruffle, to make it worse than it was before.

Lord T. Well, the manner of women's living of late is insupportable; and one way or other—

Lady T. It's to be mended, I suppose: why, so it may: but then, my dear lord, you must give one time

—and when things are at worst, you know, they may mend themselves, ha, ha!

Lord T. Madam, I am not in a humour now to trifle.

Lady T. Why then, my lord, one word of fair argument—to talk with you in your own way, now—You complain of my late hours, and I of your early ones—so far we are even, you'll allow—but pray, which gives us the best figure in the eye of the polite world; my active, spirited three in the morning, or your dull, drowsy eleven at night! Now, I think, one has the air of a woman of quality, and t'other of a plodding mechanic, that goes to bed betimes, that he may rise early to open his shop—Faugh!

Lord T. Fie, fie, madam! is this your way of reasoning? 'tis time to wake you, then—'Tis not your ill hours alone that disturb me, but as often the ill company that occasions those ill hours.

Lady T. Sure I don't understand you now, my lord; what ill company do I keep?

Lord T. Why, at best, women that lose their money, and men that win it; or, perhaps, men that are voluntary bubbles at one game, in hopes a lady will give them fair play at another. Then, that unavoidable mixture with known rakes, concealed thieves, and sharpers in embroidery—or, what to me is still more shocking, that herd of familiar, chattering, crop-eared coxcombs, who are so often like monkeys, there would be no knowing them asunder, but that their tails hang from their heads, and the monkey's grows where it should do.

Lady T. And a husband must give eminent proof of his sense, that thinks their powder-puffs dangerous.

Lord T. Their being fools, madam, is not always the husband's security; or, if it were, fortune sometimes gives them advantages that might make a thinking woman tremble.

Lady T. What do you mean?

Lord T. That women sometimes lose more than

they are able to pay; and if a creditor be a little pressing, the lady may be reduced to try, if, instead of gold, the gentleman will accept of a trinket.

Lady T. My lord, you grow scurrilous; you'll make me hate you. I'll have you to know, I keep company with the politest people in town, and the assemblies I frequent are full of such.

Lord T. So are the churches—now and then.

Lady T. My friends frequent them too, as well as the assemblies.

Lord T. Yes, and would do it oftener, if a groom of the chambers were there allowed to furnish cards to the company.

Lady T. I see what you drive at all this while: you would lay an imputation on my fame, to cover your own avarice. I might take any pleasures, I find, that were not expensive.

Lord T. Have a care, madam; don't let me think you only value your chastity to make me reproachable for not indulging you in every thing else that's vicious—I, madam, have a reputation, too, to guard, that's dear to me as yours—The follies of an ungoverned wife may make the wisest man uneasy; but 'tis his own fault, if ever they make him contemptible.

Lady T. My lord—you would make a woman mad!

Lord T. You'd make a man a fool.

Lady T. If Heaven has made you otherwise, that won't be in my power.

Lord T. Whatever may be in your inclination, madam, I'll prevent your making me a beggar, at least.

Lady T. A beggar! Cræsus! I'm out of patience!—I won't come home till four to-morrow morning.

Lord T. That may be, madam; but I'll order the doors to be locked at twelve.

Lady T. Then I won't come home till to-morrow night.

Lord T. Then, madam, you shall never come home again.

[*Exit Lord Townly.*]

Lady T. What does he mean? I never heard such a word from him in my life before? The man always

used to have manners in his worst humours. There's something, that I don't see, at the bottom of all this—But his head's always upon some impracticable scheme or other; so I won't trouble mine any longer about him. Mr. Manly, your servant.

Enter MANLY.

Man. I ask pardon for intrusion, madam; but I hope my business with my lord will excuse it.

Lady T. I believe you'll find him in the next room, sir.

Man. Will you give me leave, madam?

Lady T. Sir—you have my leave, though you were a lady.

Man. [*Aside.*] What a well-bred age do we live in! [*Exit Manly.*]

Enter Lady GRACE.

Lady T. Oh, my dear Lady Grace! how could you leave me so unmercifully alone all this while?

Lady G. I thought my lord had been with you.

Lady T. Why, yes—and therefore I wanted your relief; for he has been in such a flutter here—

Lady G. Bless me! for what?

Lady T. Only our usual breakfast; we have each of us had our dish of matrimonial comfort this morning—We have been charming company.

Lady G. I am mighty glad of it: sure it must be a vast happiness, when a man and wife can give themselves the same turn of conversation!

Lady T. Oh, the prettiest thing in the world!

Lady G. Now I should be afraid, that where two people are every day together so, they must often be in want of something to talk upon.

Lady T. Oh, my dear, you are the most mistaken in the world! married people have things to talk of, child, that never enter into the imagination of others.—Why, here's my lord and I, now, we have not been married above two short years, you know, and we have already eight or ten things constantly in bank, that, whenever we want company, we can take up any one of them for two hours together, and the subject

never the flatter; nay, if we have occasion for it, it will be as fresh the next day, too, as it was the first hour it entertained us.

Lady G. Certainly that must be vastly pretty.

Lady T. Oh, there's no life like it! Why, t'other day, for example, when you dined abroad, my lord and I, after a pretty cheerful *tête à tête* meal, sat us down by the fire-side in an easy, indolent, pick-tooth way, for about a quarter of an hour, as if we had not thought of any other's being in the room—At last, stretching himself, and yawning—My dear—says he—aw—you came home very late last night—'Twas but just turned of two, says I—I was in bed—aw—by eleven—says he—So you are every night, says I—Well, says he, I am amazed you can sit up so late—How can you be amazed, says I, at a thing that happens so often?—Upon which we entered into a conversation—and though this is a point has entertained above fifty times already, we always find so many pretty new things to say upon it, that I believe in my soul it will last as long as we live.

Lady G. But pray, in such sort of family dialogues, (though extremely well for passing the time) don't there, now and then, enter some little witty sort of bitterness?

Lady T. Oh, yes! which does not do amiss at all. A smart repartee, with a zest of recrimination at the head of it, makes the prettiest sherbet. Ay, ay, if we did not mix a little of the acid with it, a matrimonial society would be so luscious, that nothing but an old liquorish prude would be able to bear it.

Lady G. Well—certainly you have the most elegant taste—

Lady T. Though to tell you the truth, my dear, I rather think we squeezed a little too much lemon into it, this bout; for it grew so sour at last, that—I think—I almost told him he was a fool—and he, again—talked something oddly—of turning me out of doors.

Lady G. Oh, have a care of that!

Lady T. Nay, if he should, I may thank my own wise father for that—

Lady G. How so?

Lady T. Why—when my good lord first opened his honourable trenches before me, my unaccountable papa, in whose hands I then was, gave me up at discretion.

Lady G. How do you mean?

Lady T. He said, the wives of this age were come to that pass, that he would not desire even his own daughter should be trusted with pin-money; so that my whole train of separate inclinations are left entirely at the mercy of a husband's odd humours.

Lady G. Why, that, indeed, is enough to make a woman of spirit look about her.

Lady T. Nay, but to be serious, my dear; what would you really have a woman do, in my case?

Lady G. Why—if I had a sober husband, as you have, I would make myself the happiest wife in the world, by being as sober as he.

Lady T. Oh, you wicked thing! how can you tease one at this rate, when you know he is so very sober, that (except giving me money) there is not one thing in the world he can do to please me. And I, at the same time, partly by nature, and partly, perhaps, by keeping the best company, do, with my soul, love almost every thing he hates. I dote upon assemblies; my heart bounds at a ball; and at an opera—I expire. Then I love play to distraction; cards enchant me—and dice—put me out of my little wits—Dear, dear hazard!—Oh, what a flow of spirits it gives one!—Do you never play at hazard, child?

Lady G. Oh, never! I don't think it sits well upon women; there's something so masculine, so much the air of a rake in it. You see how it makes the men swear and curse; and when a woman is thrown into the same passion—why—

Lady T. That's very true; one is a little put to it, sometimes, not to make use of the same words to express it.

Lady G. Well, and, upon ill luck, pray what words are you really forced to make use of?

Lady T. Why, upon a very hard case, indeed, when a sad wrong word is rising, just to one's tongue's end, I give a great gulp—and swallow it.

Lady G. Well—and is not that enough to make you forswear play as long as you live?

Lady T. Oh, yes: I have forsworn it.

Lady G. Seriously?

Lady T. Solemnly! a thousand times; but then one is constantly forsworn.

Lady G. And how can you answer that?

Lady T. My dear, what we say when we are losers, we look upon to be no more binding than a lover's oath, or a great man's promise. But I beg pardon, child; I should not lead you so far into the world; you are a prude, and design to live soberly.

Lady G. Why, I confess, my nature and my education do, in a good degree, incline me that way.

Lady T. Well, how a woman of spirit (for you don't want that, child;) can dream of living soberly, is to me inconceivable; for you will marry, I suppose.

Lady G. I can't tell but I may.

Lady T. And won't you live in town?

Lady G. Half the year, I should like it very well.

Lady T. My stars! and you would really live in London half the year to be sober in it?

Lady G. Why not?

Lady T. Why can't you as well go and be sober in the country?

Lady G. So I would—t'other half year.

Lady T. And pray, what comfortable scheme of life would you form, now, for your summer and winter sober entertainments?

Lady G. A scheme that I think might very well content us.

Lady T. Oh, of all things, let's hear it.

Lady G. Why, in summer, I could pass my leisure hours in riding, in reading, walking by a canal, or

sitting at the end of it under a great tree; in dressing, dining, chatting with an agreeable friend; perhaps, hearing a little music, taking a dish of tea, or a game of cards, soberly; managing my family, looking into its accounts, playing with my children, if I had any, or in a thousand other innocent amusements—soberly; and possibly, by these means, I might induce my husband to be as sober as myself—

Lady T. Well, my dear, thou art an astonishing creature! For sure such primitive antediluvian notions of life have not been in any head these thousand years—Under a great tree! Oh, my soul!—But I beg we may have the sober town-scheme too—for I am charmed with the country one!—

Lady G. You shall, and I'll try to stick to my sobriety there too.

Lady T. Well, though I'm sure it will give me the vapours, I must hear it however.

Lady G. Why then, for fear of your fainting, madam, I will first so far come into the fashion, that I would never be dressed out of it—but still it should be soberly: for I can't think it any disgrace to a woman of my private fortune, not to wear her lace as fine as the wedding-suit of a first duchess. Though there is one extravagance I would venture to come up to.

Lady T. Aye, now for it—

Lady G. I would every day be as clean as a bride.

Lady T. Why, the men say, that's a great step to be made one—Well, now you are drest—Pray let's see to what purpose?

Lady G. I would visit—that is, my real friends; but as little for form as possible.—I would go to court; sometimes to an assembly, nay, play at quadrille—soberly: I would see all the good plays; and, because 'tis the fashion, now and then an opera—but I would not expire there, for fear I should never go again: and, lastly, I can't say, but for curiosity, if I liked my company, I might be drawn in once to a masquerade; and this, I think, is as far as any woman can go—soberly.

Lady T. Well if it had not been for that last piece of sobriety, I was just going to call for some surfeit-water.

Lady G. Why, don't you think, with the farther aid of breakfasting, dining, and taking the air, supping, sleeping, not to say a word of devotion, the four and twenty hours might roll over in a tolerable manner?

Lady T. Tolerable! Deplorable! Why, child all you purpose is but to endure life now I want to enjoy it—

Enter Mrs. TRUSTY.

Trust. Madam your ladyship's chair is ready.

Lady T. Have the footmen their white flambeaux yet? For last night I was poisoned.

Trust. Yes, madam; there were some come in this morning. *[Exit Trusty.]*

Lady T. My dear, you will excuse me; but you know my time is so precious—

Lady G. That I beg I may not hinder your least enjoyment of it.

Lady T. You will call on me at lady Revel's?

Lady G. Certainly.

Lady T. But I am so afraid it will break into your scheme, my dear.

Lady G. When it does, I will—soberly break from you.

Lady T. Why then, 'till we meet again, dear sister, I wish you all tolerable happiness.

[Exit Lady T.]

Lady G. There she goes—Dash! into her stream of pleasures! Poor woman, she is really a fine creature; and sometimes infinitely agreeable; nay, take her out of the madness of this town, rational in her notions and easy to live with: but she is so borne down by this torrent of vanity in vogue, she thinks every hour of her life is lost that she does not lead at the head of it. What it will end in, I tremble to imagine!—Ha, my brother, and Manly with him! I guess what they have been talking of—I shall hear

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it in my turn, I suppose, but it won't become me to
be inquisitive. [Exit Lady Grace.]

Enter Lord TOWNLY and MANLY.

Lord T. I did not think my Lady Wronghead had such a notable brain: though I can't say she was so very wise, in trusting this silly girl, you call Myrtilla, with the secret.

Man. No, my lord, you mistake me; had the girl been in the secret, perhaps I had never come at it myself.

Lord T. Why, I thought you said the girl writ this letter to you, and that my Lady Wronghead sent it inclosed to my sister?

Man. If you please to give me leave, my lord—the fact is thus—This inclosed letter to Lady Grace was a real original one, written by this girl, to the count we have been talking of: the count drops it, and my Lady Wronghead finds it: then only changing the cover, she seals it up as a letter of business, just written by herself, to me; and pretending to be in a hurry, gets this innocent girl to write the direction for her.

Lord T. Oh, then the girl did not know she was superscribing a billet-doux of her own to you?

Man. No, my lord; for when I first questioned her about the direction, she owned it immediately: but when I shewed her that her letter to the count was within it, and told her how it came into my hands, the poor creature was amazed, and thought herself betrayed both by the count and my lady—in short, upon this discovery, the girl and I grew so gracious, that she has let me into some transactions, in my Lady Wronghead's family, which, with my having a careful eye over them, may prevent the ruin of it.

Lord T. You are very generous, to be solicitous for a lady that has given you so much uneasiness.

Man. But I will be most unmercifully revenged of her: for I will do her the greatest friendship in the world—against her will.

Lord T. What an uncommon philosophy art thou master of, to make even thy malice a virtue!

Man. Yet, my lord, I assure you, there is no one action of my life gives me more pleasure than your approbation of it.

Lord T. Dear Charles! my heart's impatient 'till thou art nearer to me: and, as a proof that I have long wished thee so, while your daily conduct has chosen rather to deserve than ask my sister's favour, I have been as secretly industrious to make her sensible of your merit: and since on this occasion you have opened your whole heart to me, 'tis now with equal pleasure I assure you we have both succeeded—she is as firmly yours—

Man. Impossible! you flatter me!

Lord T. I'm glad you think it flattery: but she herself shall prove it none: she dines with us alone: when the servants are withdrawn, I'll open a conversation, that shall excuse my leaving you together—Oh, Charles! had I, like thee, been cautious in my choice, what melancholy hours had this heart avoided.

Man. No more of that, I beg my lord—

Lord T. But 'twill, at least, be some relief to my anxiety, however barren of content the state has been to me, to see so near a friend and sister happy in it. Your harmony of life will be an instance how much the choice of temper is preferable to beauty.

*While your soft hours in mutual kindness move,
You'll reach by virtue what I lost by love.*

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Mrs. MOTHERLY's House. Enter Mrs. MOTHERLY, meeting MYRTILLA.

Motherly. So, niece! where is it possible you can have been these six hours?

Myr. Oh, madam, I have such a terrible story to tell you!

Moth. A story! Ods my life! What have you done with the count's note of five hundred pounds I sent you about? Is it safe? Is it good? Is it security?

Myr. Yes, yes, it is safe: but for its goodness—Mercy on us! I have been in a fair way to be hanged about it!

Moth. The dickens! has the rogue of a count played us another trick, then?

Myr. You shall hear, madam: when I came to Mr. Cash, the banker's, and shewed him his note for five hundred pounds, payable to the count, or order, in two months—he looked earnestly upon it, and desired me to step into the inner room, while he examined his books—after I had stayed about ten minutes, he came in to me—claps the door, and charges me with a constable for forgery.

Moth. Ah, poor soul! and how didst thou get off?

Myr. While I was ready to sink in this condition, I begged him to have a little patience, 'till I could send for Mr. Manly, whom he knew to be a gentleman of worth and honour, and who, I was sure, would convince him whatever fraud might be in the note, that I was myself an innocent abused woman—and, as, good luck would have it, in less than half an hour Mr. Manly came—so, without mincing the matter, I fairly told him upon what design the count had lodged that note in your hands, and, in short, laid open the whole scheme he had drawn us into to make our fortune.

Moth. The devil you did!

Myr. Why, how do you think it was possible I could any otherwise make Mr. Manly my friend, to help me out of the scrape I was in? To conclude, he soon made Mr. Cash easy, and sent away the constable: nay, farther, he promised me, if I would trust the note in his hands, he would take care it should be fully paid before it was due, and at the same time would give me an ample revenge upon the count; so that all you have to consider now, madam, is, whe-

ther you think yourself safer in the count's hands, or Mr. Manly's.

Moth. Nay, nay, child; there is no choice in the matter! Mr Manly may be a friend indeed, if any thing in our power can make him so.

Myr. Well, madam; and now, pray, how stand matters at home here? What has the count done with the ladies?

Moth. Why, every thing he has a mind to do, by this time, I suppose. He is in as high favour with miss, as he is with my lady.

Myr. Pray, where are the ladies?

Moth. Rattling abroad in their own coach, and the well-bred count along with them: they have been scouring all the shops in the town over, buying fine things and new clothes from morning to night: they have made one voyage already, and have brought home such a cargo of bawbles and trumpery—Mercy on the poor man that's to pay for them!

Myr. Did not the young 'squire go with them?

Moth. No, no; Miss said, truly he would but disgrace their party: so they even left him asleep by the kitchen fire.

Myr. Has not he ask'd after me all this while? For I had a sort of an assignation with him.

Moth. Oh, yes, he has been in a bitter taking about it. At last his disappointment grew so uneasy, that he fairly fell a crying; so to quiet him, I sent one of the maids and John Moody abroad with him to shew him—the lions, and the monument. Ods me! there he is just come home again—You may have business with him—so I'll even turn you together. [*Exit.*

Enter 'Squire RICHARD.

'Squ. Rich. Soah, soah, Mrs. Myrtilla, where han yaw been aw this day, forsooth?

Myr. Nay, if you go to that, 'squire, where have you been, pray?

'Squ. Rich. Why, when I fun' at yow were no loikly to come whoam, I were ready to hong my sel—so John Moody, and I, and one o' your lasses,

have been—Lord knows where—a seeing o' the soights.

Myr. Well, and pray what have you seen, sir?

'Squ. Rich. Flesh! I cawnt tell, not I—seen every thing, I think. First, there we went o' top o' the what d'ye call it? there, the great huge stone post, up the rawnd and rawnd stairs, that twine and twine about just an as thof it was a cork-screw.

Myr. Oh, the monument; well, and was it not a fine sight from the top.

'Squ. Rich. Sight, miss! I know no'—I saw nought but smoke and brick housen, and steeple tops—then there was such a mortal ting-tang of bells, and rumbling of carts and coaches; and then the folks under one looked so snall, and made such a hum and buz, it put me in mind of my mother's great glass bee-hive in our garden in the country.

Myr. I think, master, you give a very good account of it.

'Squ. Rich. Ay, but I did not like it: for my head—my head—began to turn—so I trundled me down stairs agen like a round trencher.

Myr. Well, but this was not all you saw, I suppose?

'Squ. Rich. Noa, noa, we went after that, and saw the lions, and I liked them better by hawlf; they are pure grim devils; hoh, hoh! I touke a stick, and gave one of them such a poke o' the noase—I believe he would ha' snapt my head off, an' he could have got me. Hoh! hoh! hoh!

Myr. Well, master, when you and I go abroad, I'll shew you prettier sights than these—there's a masquerade to-morrow.

'Squ. Rich. Oh, laud, ay! they say that's a pure thing for Merry Andrews, and those sort of comical munimers—and the count tells me, that there lads and lasses may jig their tails, and eat, and drink, without grudging, all night long.

Myr. What would you say now, if I should get you a ticket, and go along with you?

'Squ. Rich. Ah, dear!

Myr. But have a care, 'squire, the fine ladies there are terribly tempting; look well to your heart, or, ads me! they'll whip it up in the trip of a minute.

'Squ. Rich. Ay, but they cawnt thoa—soa let 'um look to themselves, an' ony of 'um falls in love with me—mayhap they had as good be quiet.

Myr. Why sure you would not refuse a fine lady, would you?

Squ. Rich. Ay, but I would though, unless it were—one as I know of.

Myf. Oh, oh, then you have left your heart in the country, I find?

'Squ. Rich. Noa, noa, my heart—ch—my heart e'nt awt o' this room.

Myr. I am glad you have it about you, however.

'Squ. Rich. Nay, mayhap, not soa noather, somebody else may have it, 'at you little think of.

Myr. I can't imagine what you mean!

'Squ. Rich. Noa! why doan't you know how many folks there is in this room, naw?

Myr. Very fine, master, I see you have learnt the town gallantry already.

Squ. Rich. Why, doan't you believe 'at I have a kindness for you then?

Myr. Fy, fy, master, how you talk; beside, you are too young to think of a wife.

'Squ. Rich. Ay! but I caunt help thinking o' yow, for all that.

Myr. How! why sure, sir, you don't pretend to think of me in a dishonourable way?

'Squ. Rich. Nay, that's as you see good—I did no' think 'at you would ha' thowght of me for a husband, mayhap; unless I had means in my own hands; and feyther allows me but haulf a crown a week, as yet awhile.

Myr. Oh, when I like any body, 'tis not want of money will make me refuse them.

'Squ. Rich. Well, that's just my mind now: for an' I like a girl, miss, I would take her in her smock.

Myr. Ay, master, now you speak like a man of honour; this shews something of a true heart in you.

'Squ. Rich. Ay, and a true heart you'll find me; try when you will.

Myr. Hush, hush, heré's your papa come home, and my aunt with him.

'Squ. Rich. A devil rive 'em, what do they come naw for?

Myr. When you and' I get to the masquerade, you shall see what I'll say to you.

'Squ. Rich. Well, hands upon't, then—

Myr. There—

'Squ. Rich. One buss, and a bargain. [*Kisses her.*]
Ads wauntlikins! as soft and plump as a narrow-
pudding. [*Exeunt severally.*]

Enter Sir FRANCIS WRONGHEAD and Mrs. MOTHERLY.

Sir Fran. What! my wife and daughter abroad, say you?

Moth. Oh, dear sir, they have been mighty busy all the day long; they just came home to snap up a short dinner, and so went out again.

Sir Fran. Well, well, I shan't stay supper for 'em, I can tell 'em that; for od's heart, I have nothing in me, but a toast and tankard, since morning.

Moth. I am afraid, sir, these late parliament hours won't agree with you.

Sir Fran. Why, truly, Mrs. Motherly, they don't do right with us country gentlemen; to lose one meal out of three, is a hard tax upon a good stomach.

Moth. It is so indeed, sir.

Sir Fran. But howsomever, Mrs Motherly, when we consider, that what we suffer is for the good of our country—

Moth. Why truly, sir, that is something.

Sir Fran. Oh, there's a great deal to be said for't—the good of one's country is above all things—A true-hearted Englishman thinks nothing too much for it—I have heard of some honest gentlemen so very

zealous, that for the good of their country—they would sometimes go to dinner at midnight.

Moth. Oh, that goodness of 'em! sure their country must have a vast esteem for them?

Sir Fran. So they have, Mrs. Motherly; they are so respected when they come home to their boroughs after a session, and so beloved—that their country will come and dine with them every day in the week.

Moth. Dear me! What a fine thing 'tis to be so populous!

Sir Fran. It is a great comfort, indeed! and, I can assure you, you are a good sensible woman, Mrs. Motherly.

Moth. Oh, dear sir, your honour's pleased to compliment.

Sir Fran. No, no, I see you know how to value people of consequence.

Moth. Good lack! here's company, sir; will you give me leave to get you a little something 'till the ladies come home, sir?

Sir Fran. Why, troth, I don't think it would be amiss.

Moth. It shall be done in a moment, sir. [*Exit,*

Enter MANLY.

Man. Sir Francis, your servant.

Sir Fran. Cousin Manly.

Man. I am come to see how the family goes on here.

Sir Fran. Troth! all as busy as bees; I have been upon the wing ever since eight o'clock this morning.

Man. By your early hour, then, I suppose you have been making your court to some of the great men.

Sir Fran. Why, faith! you have hit it, sir—I was advised to lose no time: so I e'en went straight forward to one great man I had never seen in all my life before.

Man. Right, that was doing business: but who had you got to introduce you?

Sir Fran. Why, nobody—I remember I had heard

a wise man say—My son, be bold—so troth! I introduced myself.

Man. As how, pray?

Sir Fran. Why, thus—Look ye—Please your lordship, says I, I am Sir Francis Wronghead, of Bumper-hall, and member of parliament for the borough of Guzzledown—Sir, your humble servant, says my lord; thof I have not the honour to know your person, I have heard you are a very honest gentleman, and I am glad your borough has made choice of so worthy a representative; and so, says he, Sir Francis, have you any service to command me? Naw, cousin, those last words, you may be sure gave me no small encouragement. And thof I know, sir, you have no extraordinary opinion of my parts, yet I believe, you won't say I missed it naw!

Man. Well, I hope I shall have no cause.

Sir Fran. So, when I found him so courteous—My lord, says I, I did not think to ha' troubled your lordship with business upon my first visit; but, since your lordship is pleased not to stand upon ceremony,—why truly, says I, I think naw is as good as another time.

Man. Right! there you pushed him home.

Sir Fran. Ay, ay, I had a mind to let him see that I was none of your mealy-mouthed ones.

Man. Very good.

Sir Fran. So, in short, my lord, says I, I have a good estate—but—a—it's a little awt at elbows: and as I desire to serve my king as well as my country, I shall be very willing to accept of a place at court.

Man. So this was making short work on't.

Sir Fran. I'cod! I shot him flying, cousin: some of your hawf-witted ones, naw, would ha' hummed and hawed, and dangled a month or two after him, before they durst open their mouths about a place, and, mayhap, not ha' got it at last neither.

Man. Oh, I'm glad you're so sure on't—

Sir Fran. You shall hear, cousin—Sir Francis says my lord, pray what sort of a place may you ha

turned your thoughts upon? My lord, says I, beggars must not be chusers; but my place, says I, about a thousand a-year, will be well enough to be doing with, till something better falls in—for I thought it would not look well to stand haggling with him at first.

Man. No, no, your business was to get footing any way.

Sir Fran. Right! ay, there's it! ay cousin, I see you know the world.

Man. Yes, yes, one sees more of it every day—Well, but what said my lord to all this?

Sir Fran. Sir Francis, says he, I shall be glad to serve you any way that lies in my power; so he gave me a squeeze by the hand, as much as to say, give yourself no trouble—I'll do your business; with that he turned himself about to somebody with a coloured ribbon across her, that looked, in my thoughts, as if he came for a place too.

Man. Ha! so, upon these hopes, you are to make your fortune!

Sir Fran. Why, do you think there's any doubt of it, sir?

Man. Oh, no, I have not the least doubt about it—for just as you have done, I made my fortune ten years ago.

Sir Fran. Why, I never knew you had a place, cousin.

Man. Nor I neither, upon my faith, cousin. But you, perhaps, may have better fortune: for I suppose my lord has heard of what importance you were in the debate to-day—You have been since down at the house, I presume.

Sir Fran. Oh, yes! I would not neglect the house for ever so much.

Man. Well, and pray what have they done there?

Sir Fran. Why, truth! I can't well tell you what they have done; but I can tell you what I did, and I think pretty well in the main, only I happened to make a little mistake at last, indeed.

Man. How was that?

Sir Fran. Why, they were all got there into a sort of a puzzling debate about the good of the nation—and I were always for that, you know—but, in short, the arguments were so long-winded o' both sides, that waunds! I did not well understand 'um: hawsomever I was convinced, and so resolved to vote right, according to my conscience—so when they came to put the question, as they call it,—I don't know haw 'twas—but I doubt I cried ay! when I should ha' cried no!

Man. How came that about?

Sir Fran. Why, by a mistake, as I tell you—for there was a good-humoured sort of a gentleman, one Mr. Totherside, I think they call him, that sat next me, as soon as I had cried ay! gives me a hearty shake by the hand. Sir, says he, you are a man of honour, and a true Englishman; and I should be proud to be better acquainted with you—and so, with that he takes me by the sleeve, along with the crowd into the lobby—so I knew nowght—but, ods-flesh! I was got o' the wrong side the post—for I were told, afterwards, I should have staid where I was.

Man. And so, if you had not quite made your fortune before, you have clinched it now!—Ah, thou head of the Wrongheads! [Aside.

Sir Fran. Odso! here's my lady come home at last—I hope, cousin, you will be so kind as to take a family supper with us?

Man. Another time, sir Francis; but to-night I am engaged.

Enter Lady WRONGHEAD, Miss JENNY, and Count BASSET.

Lady Wrong. Cousin, your servant; I hope you will pardon my rudeness; but we have really been in such a continual hurry here, that we have not had a leisure moment to return your last visit.

Man. Oh, madam, I am a man of no ceremony; you see that has not hindered my coming again.

Lady Wrong. You are infinitely obliging; but I'll redeem my credit with you.

Man. At your own time, madam.

Count Bas. I must say that for Mr. Manly, madam, if making people easy is the rule of good-breeding, he is certainly the best-bred man in the world.

Man. Soh! I am not to drop my acquaintance, I find—[*Aside.*] I am afraid, sir, I shall grow vain upon your good opinion.

Count Bas. I don't know that, sir; but I am sure what you are pleased to say makes me so.

Man. The most impudent modesty that ever I met with.

Lady Wrong. Lard! how ready his wit is. [*Aside.*]

Sir Fran. Don't you think, sir, the count's a very fine gentleman? [*Apart.*]

Man. Oh, among the ladies, certainly. [*Apart.*]

Sir Fran. And yet he's as stout as a lion. Waund, he'll storm any thing. [*Apart.*]

Man. Will he so? Why then, sir, take care of your citadel.

Sir Fran. Ah, you are a wag, cousin. [*Apart.*]

Man. I hope, ladies, the town air continues to agree with you.

Jenny. Oh, perfectly well, sir! We have been abroad in our new coach all day long—and we have bought an ocean of fine things. And to-morrow we go to the masquerade; and on Friday to the play; and on Saturday to the opera; and on Sunday we are to be at the what-d'ye you call it—assembly, and see the ladies play at quadrille, and piquet, and ombre, and hazard, and basset; and on Monday we are to see the king, and so on Tuesday—

Lady Wrong. Hold, hold, miss! you must not let your tongue run so fast, child—you forget; you know I brought you hither to learn modesty.

Man. Yes, yes! and she is improved with a vengeance— [*Aside.*]

Jenny. Lawrd! mamma, I am sure I did not say any harm; and if one must not speak in one's turn,

one may be kept under as long as one lives, for aught I see.

Lady Wrong. O' my conscience, this girl grows so head-strong—

Sir Fran. Ay, ay, there's your fine growing spirit for you! now tack it down an' you can.

Jenny. All I said, papa, was only to entertain my cousin Manly.

Man. My pretty dear, I am mightily obliged to you.

Jenny. Look you there now, madam.

Lady Wrong. Hold your tongue, I say.

Jenny. [*Turning away and glowering.*] I declare it, I won't bear it: she is always snubbing me before you, sir!—I know why she does it, well enough—

[*Aside to the Count.*]

Count Bas. Hush, hush, my dear! don't be uneasy at that; she'll suspect us.

[*Aside.*]

Jenny. Let her suspect, what do I care—I don't know but I have as much reason to suspect as she—though perhaps I am not so afraid of her.

Count Bas. [*Aside*] I'gad, if I don't keep a tight hand on my tit, here, she'll run away with my project before I can bring it to bear.

Lady Wrong. [*Aside.*] Perpetually hanging upon him! The young harlot is certainly in love with him; but I must not let them see I think so—and yet I can't bear it. Upon my life, count, you'll spoil that forward girl—you should not encourage her so.

Count Bas. Pardon me, madam, I was only advising her to observe what your ladyship said to her.

Man. Yes, truly, her observations have been something particular.

[*Aside.*]

Count Bas. In one word, madam, she has a jealousy of your ladyship, and I am forced to encourage her to blind it; 'twill be better to take no notice of her behaviour to me.

[*Apart.*]

Lady Wrong. You are right, I will be more cautious.

[*Apart.*]

Count Bas. To-morrow, at the masquerade, we may lose her.

Lady Wrong. We shall be observed; I'll send you a note, and settle that affair—go on with the girl, and don't mind me.

Count Bas. I have been taking your part, my little angel.

Lady Wrong. Jenny! come hither, child—you must not be so hasty, my dear—I only advise you for your good.

Jenny. Yes, mamma; but when I am told of a thing before company, it always makes me worse, you know.

Man. If I have any skill in the fair sex, miss and her mamma have only quarrelled because they are both of a mind. This facetious count seems to have made a very genteel step into the family.

Enter MYRTILLA. MANLY talks apart with her.

Lady Wrong. Well, sir Francis, and what news have you brought us from Westminster to-day?

Sir Fran. News, madam! I'cod! I have some—and such as does not come every day, I can tell you—a word in your ear—I have got a promise of a place at court of a thousand pound a-year already.

Lady Wrong. Have you so, sir? And pray who may you thank for't? Now, who is in the right? Is not this better than throwing so much away after a stinking pack of fox-hounds in the country? Now your family may be the better for it.

Sir Fran. Nay, that's what persuaded me to come up, my dove.

Lady Wrong. Mighty well—come—let me have another hundred pound then.

Sir Fran. Another, child? Waunds! you have had one hundred this morning, pray what's become of that, my dear?

Lady Wrong. What's become of it? Why I'll shew you, my love! Jenny, have you the bills about you.

Jenny. Yes, mamma.

Lady Wrong. What's become of it? Why laid out, my dear, with fifty more to it, that I was forced to borrow of the count here.

Jenny. Yes, indeed, papa, and that would hardly do neither—There's the account.

Sir Fran. [*Turning over the bills.*] Let's see! let's see! what the devil have we got here?

Man. Then you have sounded your aunt, you say, and she readily comes into all I proposed to you.

[*Apart.*

Myr. Sir, I'll answer, with my life, she is most thankfully yours in every article. She mightily desires to see you, sir.

[*Apart.*

Man. I am going home, directly; bring her to my house in half an hour; and if she makes good what you tell me, you shall both find your account in it.

[*Apart.*

Myr. Sir, she shall not fail you.

[*Apart.*

Sir Fran. Od's-life! madam, here's nothing but toys and trinkets, and fans, and clock stockings, by wholesale.

Lady Wrong. There's nothing but what's proper, and for your credit, Sir Francis—Nay, you see I am so good a housewife, that in necessaries for myself I have scarce laid out a shilling.

Sir Fran. No, by my troth, so it seems; for the devil o' one thing's here that I can see you have any occasion for.

Lady Wrong. My dear, do you think I came hither to live out of the fashion? why, the greatest distinction of a fine lady in this town is in the variety of pretty things that she has no occasion for.

Jenny. Sure, papa, could you imagine, that women of quality wanted nothing but stays and petticoats?

Lady Wrong. Now, that is so like him!

Man. So the family comes on finely. [*Aside.*

Lady Wrong. Lord, if men were always to govern, what dowdies they would reduce their wives to!

Sir Fran. An hundred pound in the morning, and

want another afore night! Waunds and fire! the lord mayor of London could not hold at this rate!

Man. Oh, do you feel it, sir? [*Aside.*

Lady Wrong. My dear, you seem uneasy; let me have the hundred pound, and compose yourself.

Sir Fran. Compose the devil, madam! why do you consider what a hundred pounds a day comes to in a year?

Lady Wrong. My life, if I account with you from one day to another, that's really all my head is able to bear at a time—But I'll tell you what I consider—I consider that my advice has got you a thousand pound a year this morning—That now, methinks, you might consider, sir.

Sir Fran. A thousand a-year! Waunds, madam, but I have not touch'd a penny of it yet!

Man. Nor ever will, I'll answer for him. [*Aside.*

Enter Squire RICHARD.

Squ. Rich. Feyther, an you doan't come quickly, the meat will be coaled: and I'd fain pick a bit with you.

Lady Wrong. Bless me, sir Francis! you are not going to sup by yourself.

Sir Fran. No, but I'm going to dine by myself, and that's pretty near the matter, madam.

Lady Wrong. Had not you as good stay a little, my dear. We shall all eat in half an hour; and I was thinking to ask my cousin Manly to take a family morsel with us.

Sir Fran. Nay, for my cousin's good company, I don't care if I ride a day's journey without baiting.

Man. By no means, sir Francis. I am going upon a little business.

Sir Fran. Well, sir, I know you don't love compliments.

Man. You'll excuse me, madam—

Lady Wrong. Since you have business, sir—

[*Exit Manly.*

Enter Mrs. MOTHERLY.

Oh, Mrs. Motherly, you were saying this morning

you had some very fine lace to shew me—can't I see it now? [*Sir Francis stares.*]

Moth. Why, really, madam, I had made a sort of a promise to let the Countess of Nicely have the first sight of it for the birth-day: but your ladyship—

Lady Wrong. Oh, I die if I don't see it before her.

'Squ. Rich. Woan't you go, seyther? [*Apart.*]

Sir Fran. Waunds, lad! I shall ha' noa stomach at this rate. [*Apart.*]

Moth. Well, madam, though I say it, 'tis the sweetest pattern that ever came over—and for fineness—no cobweb comes up to it.

Sir Fran. Ods guts and gizzard, madam? Lace as fine as a cobweb! why, what the devil's that to cost now?

Moth. Nay, if sir Francis does not like of it, madam—

Lady Wrong. He like it! Dear Mrs. Motherly, he is not to wear it.

Sir Fran. Flesh, madam! but I suppose I am to pay for it.

Lady Wrong. No doubt on't! Think of your thousand a year, and who got it you; go, eat your dinner, and be thankful, go! [*Driving him to the door.*]
Come, Mrs. Motherly.

[*Exit Lady Wronghead with Mrs. Motherly.*]

Sir Fran. Very fine! so here I mun fast, till I am almost famished, for the good of my country, while madam is laying me out an hundred pound a-day in lace as fine as a cobweb, for the honour of my family! Ods-flesh! things had need go well at this rate.

'Squ. Rich. Nay, nay—come, seyther.

[*Exeunt Sir Fran. and 'Squ. Rich.*]

Enter Mrs. MOTHERLY.

Moth. Madam, my lady desires you and the count will please to come and assist her fancy in some of the new laces.

Count Bas. We'll wait upon her.

[*Exit Mrs. Motherly.*]

Jenny. So, I told you how it was! you see she can't bear to leave us together.

Count Bas. No matter, my dear: you know she has ask'd me to stay supper; so when your papa and she are a-bed, Mrs. Myrtilla will let me into the house again; then you may steal into her chamber, and we'll have a pretty sneaker of punch together.

Myr. Ay, ay, madam, you may command me in any thing.

Jenny. Well, that will be pure!

Count Bas. But you had best go to her alone, my life: it will look better if I come after you.

Jenny. Ay, so it will: and to-morrow, you know, at the masquerade. And then!—

“ SONG.

- “ Oh, I'll have a husband! ay, marry;
 “ For why should I longer tarry,
 “ For why should I longer tarry,
 “ Than other brisk girls have done?
 “ For if I stay till I grow grey,
 “ They'll call me old maid, and fusty old jade;
 “ So I'll no longer tarry;
 “ But I'll have a husband, ay, marry,
 “ If money can buy me one.
 “ My mother, she says, I'm too coming;
 “ And still in my ears she is drumming,
 “ And still in my ears she is drumming,
 “ That I such vain thoughts should shun.
 “ My sisters they cry, oh, fy! and, oh, fy!
 “ But yet I can see, they're as coming as me;
 “ So let me have husbands in plenty:
 “ I'd rather have twenty times twenty,
 “ Than die an old maid undone.” [Exit.

Myr. So, sir, am not I very commode to you?

Count Bas. Well, child, and don't you find your account in it? Did I not tell you we might still be of use to one another?

Myr. Well, but how stands your affair with miss in the main?

Count Bas. Oh, she's mad for the masquerade! It drives like a nail; we want nothing now but a parson to clinch it. Did not your aunt say she could get one at a short warning?

Myr. Yes, yes, my lord Townly's chaplain is her cousin, you know; he'll do your business and mine at the same time.

Count Bas. Oh, it's true; but where shall we appoint him?

Myr. Why, you know my lady Townly's house is always open to the masks upon a ball-night, before they go to the Hay-market.

Count Bas. Good.

Myr. Now the doctor purposes we should all come thither in our habits, and when the rooms are full, we may steal up into his chamber, he says, and there—crack—he'll give us all canonical commission to go to-bed together.

Count Bas. Admirable! Well, the devil fetch me, if I shall not be heartily glad to see thee well-settled, child.

Myr. And may the black gentleman tuck me under his arm at the same time, if I shall not think myself obliged to you as long as I live.

Count Bas. One kiss for old acquaintance sake—I'gad I shall want to be busy again.

Myr. Oh, you'll have one shortly will find you employment—but I must run to my squire.

Count Bas. And I to the ladies—so your humble servant, sweet Mrs. Wronghead.

Myr. Yours, as in duty bound, most noble Count Basset.

[Exit Myr.]

Count Bas. Why, ay! count! That title has been of some use to me indeed; not that I have any more pretence to it than I have to a blue ribband. Yet, I made a pretty considerable figure in life with it. I have loll'd in my own chariot, dealt at assemblies, dined with ambassadors, and made one at quadrille with the first women of quality—But—*tempora mutantur*—since that damn'd squadron at White's have left me

out of their last secret, I am reduced to trade upon my own stock of industry, and make my last push upon a wife. If my card comes up right (which, I think, cannot fail), I shall once more cut a figure, and cock my hat in the face of the best of them: for since our modern men of fortune are grown wise enough to be sharpers, I think sharpers are fools that don't take up the airs of men of quality. [Exit.]

ACT V. SCENE I.

Lord Townly's House. Enter MANLY and Lady GRACE.

" *Manly.* THERE's something, madam, hangs upon your mind to-day: is it unfit to trust me with it?

" *Lady G.* Since you will know—my sister, then—unhappy woman!

" *Man.* What of her?

" *Lady G.* I fear is on the brink of ruin.

" *Man.* I am sorry for it—what has happened?

" *Lady G.* Nothing so very new; but the continual repetition of it at last has raised my brother to an intemperance that I tremble at.

" *Man.* Have they had any words upon it?

" *Lady G.* He has not seen her since yesterday.

" *Man.* What! not at home all night?

" *Lady G.* About five this morning, in she came; but with such looks, and such an equipage of misfortunes at her heels—What can become of her?

" *Man.* Has not my lord seen her, say you?

" *Lady G.* No; he changed his bed last night—I sat with him alone till twelve, in expectation of her: but when the clock struck, he started from his chair, and grew incensed to that degree, that had I not, almost on my knees, dissuaded him, he had ordered the doors, that instant, to have been locked against her.

" *Man.* How terrible is his situation, when the most justifiable severities he can use against her

" are liable to be the mirth of all the dissolute card-
" tables in town.

" *Lady G.* 'Tis that, I know, has made him bear
" so long: but you that feel for him, Mr. Manly,
" will assist him to support his honour, and, if pos-
" sible, preserve his quiet; therefore I beg you don't
" leave the house, till one or both of them can be
" wrought into better temper.

" *Man.* How amiable is this concern in you!

" *Lady G.* For Heaven's sake, don't mind me;
" but think on something to preserve us all.

" *Man.* I shall not take the merit of obeying your
" commands, madam, to serve my lord—But pray,
" madam, let me into all that has past since yesternight.

" *Lady G.* When my intreaties had prevailed upon
" my lord, not to make a story for the town, by so
" public a violence, as shutting her at once out of
" his doors, he ordered an apartment next to my
" lady's to be made ready for him—While that was
" doing, I tried, by all the little arts I was mistress
" of, to amuse him into temper; in short, a silent
" grief was all I could reduce him to—On this, we
" took our leaves, and parted to our repose: what his
" was, I imagine by my own; for I ne'er closed my
" eyes. About five, as I told you, I heard my lady
" at the door; so I slipped on a gown, and sat al-
" most an hour with her in her own chamber.

" *Man.* What said she, when she did not find my
" lord there?

" *Lady G.* Oh! so far from being shocked or
" alarmed at it, that she blessed the occasion; and
" said that, in her conditon, the chat of a female
" friend was far preferable to the best husband's
" company in the world.

" *Man.* Where has she spirits to support so much
" insensibility?

" *Lady G.* Nay, 'tis incredible; for though she had
" lost every shilling she had in the world, and stretched
" her credit even to breaking, she rallied her own
" follies with such vivacity, and painted the penance

" she knows she must undergo for them in such ridiculous lights, that had not my concern for a brother been too strong for her wit, she had almost disarmed my anger.

" *Man.* Her mind may have another cast by this time: the most flagrant dispositions have their hours of anguish, which their pride conceals from company. But pray, madam, how could she avoid coming down to dine?

" *Lady G.* Oh! she took care of that before she went to bed, by ordering her woman, whenever she was asked for, to say she was not well.

" *Man.* You have seen her since she was up, I presume?

" *Lady G.* Up! I question whether she be awake yet.

" *Man.* Terrible; what a figure does she make now! That nature should throw away so much beauty upon a creature, to make such a slatternly use of it!

" *Lady G.* Oh, fie! there is not a more elegant beauty in town, when she is dressed.

" *Man.* In my eye, madam, she that's early dressed has ten times her elegance.

" *Lady G.* But she won't be long now, I believe; for I think I see her chocolate going up—Mrs. Trusty—a hem!

" *Mrs. TRUSTY comes to the door.*

" *Man.* [*Aside*] Five o'clock in the afternoon for a lady of quality's breakfast is an elegant hour indeed! which, to shew her more polite way of living too, I presume she eats in her bed.

" *Lady G.* [*To Mrs. Trusty.*] And when she is up, I would be glad she would let me come to her toilet—That's all, Mrs. Trusty.

" *Trusty.* I will be sure to let her ladyship know, madam. [*Exit.*]

" *Enter a Servant.*

" *Serv.* Sir Francis Wronghead, sir, desires to speak with you.

" *Man.* He comes unseasonably—What shall I do with him?

" *Lady G.* Oh, see him, by all means! we shall have time enough; in the mean while, I'll step in and have an eye upon my brother. Nay, don't mind me—you have business—

" *Man.* You must be obeyed—

" [*Retreating, while Lady Grace goes out.*]

" Desire Sir Francis to walk in—[*Exit Servant.*] I suppose, by this time, his wise worship begins to find that the balance of his journey to London is on the wrong side."

Enter Sir FRANCIS WRONGHEAD.

Sir Francis, your servant. How came I by the favour of this extraordinary visit?

Sir Fran. Ah, cousin!

Man. Why that sorrowful face, man?

Sir Fran. I have no friend alive but you—

Man. I am sorry for that—But what's the matter?

Sir Fran. I have played the fool by this journey, I see now—for my bitter wife—

Man. What of her?

Sir Fran. Is playing the devil.

Man. Why, truly, that's a part that most of your fine ladies begin with, as soon as they get to London.

Sir Fran. If I'm a living man, cousin, she has made away with above two hundred and fifty pounds since yesterday morning.

Man. Ha! I see a good housewife will do a great deal of work in a little time.

Sir Fran. Work, do they call it? Fine work, indeed!

Man. Well, but how do you mean made away with it? What, she has laid it out, may be—but I suppose you have an account of it.

Sir Fran. Yes, yes, I have had the account, indeed; but I mun needs say, it's a very sorry one.

Man. Pray, let's hear?

Sir Fran. Why, first I let her have an hundred and fifty, to get things handsome about her, to let

the world see that I was somebody; and thought that sum was very genteel.

Man. Indeed I think so; and in the country might have served her a twelvemonth.

Sir Fran. Why, so it might—but here, in this fine town, forsooth, it could not get through four-and-twenty hours—for in half that time it was all squandered away in bawbles, and new-fashioned trumpery.

Man. Oh! for ladies in London, Sir Francis, all this might be necessary.

Sir Fran. Noa, there's the plague on't; the devil o' one useful thing do I see for it, but two pair of laced shoes, and those stond me in three pounds three shillings a pair, too.

Man. Dear sir, this is nothing; Why we have city wives here, that while their good man is selling three pennyworth of sugar, will give you twenty pounds for a short apron.

Sir Fran. Mercy on us, what a mortal poor devil is a husband!

Man. Well, but I hope you have nothing else to complain of.

Sir Fran. Ah, would I could say so too!—but there's another hundred behind yet, that goes more to my heart than all that went before it.

Man. And how might that be disposed of?

Sir Fran. Troth, I am almost ashamed to tell you,

Man. Out with it.

Sir Fran. Why, she has been at an assembly.

Man. What, since I saw you! I thought you had all supped at home last night.

Sir Fran. Why, so we did—and all as merry as grigs—I'cod my heart was so open that I tossed another hundred into her apron, to go out early this morning with—But the cloth was no sooner taken away, than in comes my lady Townly here, (who, between you and I—mum—has had the devil to pay yonder) with another rantipole dame of quality, and out they must have her, they said, to introduce her at my lady No-

ble's assembly, forsooth—A few words, you may be sure, made the bargain—so, bawnee! and away they drive, as if the devil had got into the coach-box—so, about four or five in the morning—home comes madam, with her eyes a foot deep in her head—and my poor hundred pounds left behind her at the hazard-table.

Man. All lost at dice!

Sir Fran. Every shilling—among a parcel of pig-tail puppies, and pale-faced women of quality.

Man. But pray, sir Francis, how came you, after you found her so ill an housewife of one sun, so soon to trust her with another?

Sir Fran. Why, truly, I mun say that was partly my own fault: for if I had not been a blab of my tongue, I believe that last hundred might have been saved.

Man. How so?

Sir Fran. Why, like an owl as I was, out of goodwill, forsooth, partly to keep her in humour, I must needs tell her of the thousand pounds a-year I had just got the promise of—l'cod, she lays her claws upon it that moment—said it was all owing to her advice, and truly she would have her share on't.

Man. What, before you had it yourself?

Sir Fran. Why, ay; that's what I told her—My dear, said I, mayhap I mayn't receive the first quarter on't this half year.

Man. Sir Francis, I have heard you with a great deal of patience, and I really feel compassion for you.

Sir Fran. Truly, and well you may, cousin; for I don't see that my wife's goodness is a bit the better for bringing to London.

Man. If you remember, I gave you a hint of it.

Sir Fran. Why, ay, it's true, you did so; but the devil himself could not have believed she would have rid post to him.

Man. Sir, if you stay but a fortnight in this town, you will every day see hundreds as fast upon the gallop as she is.

Sir Fran. Ah, this London is a base place indeed! — Waunds, if things should happen to go wrong with me at Westminster, at this rate, how the devil shall I keep out of a jail?

Man. Why, truly, there seems to be but one way to avoid it.

Sir Fran. Ah, would you could tell me that, cousin!

Man. The way lies plain before you, sir; the same road that brought you hither, will carry you safe home again.

Sir Fran. Ods-flesh, cousin! what! and leave a thousand pounds a year behind me?

Man. Pooh, pooh! leave any thing behind you, but your family, and you are a saver by it.

Sir Fran. Ay, but consider, cousin, what a scurvy figure shall I make in the country, if I come down without it.

Man. You will make a much more lamentable figure in a jail without it.

Sir Fran. Mayhap 'at yow have no great opinion of it then, cousin?

Man. Sir Francis, to do you the service of a real friend, I must speak very plainly to you: you don't yet see half the ruin that's before you.

Sir Fran. Good-lack! how may you mean, cousin?

Man. In one word, your whole affairs stand thus:—In a week you'll lose your seat at Westminster—In a fortnight my lady will run you into jail, by keeping the best company—In four-and-twenty hours your daughter will run away with a sharper, because she han't been used to better company: and your son will steal into marriage with a cast mistress, because he has not been used to any company at all.

Sir Fran. I' th' name of goodness, why should you think all this?

Man. Because I have proof of it; in short, I know so much of their secrets, that if all this is not prevented to-night, it will be out of your power to do it to-morrow morning.

Sir Fran. Mercy upon us! you frighten me——
Well, sir, I will be governed by you: but what am I to do in this case?

Man. I have not time here to give you proper instructions; but about eight this evening I'll call at your lodgings, and there you shall have full conviction how much I have it at heart to serve you.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir, my lord desires to speak with you.

Man. I'll wait upon him.

Sir Fran. Well, then, I'll go strait home, naw.

Man. At eight depend upon me.

Sir Fran. Ah, dear cousin! I shall be bound to you as long as I live. Mercy deliver us, what a terrible journey have I made on't. [*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE II.

Opens to a Dressing-room; Lady TOWNLY, as just up, walks to her Toilet, leaning on Mrs. TRUSTY.

Trust. Dear madam, what should make your ladyship so out of order?

Lady T. How is it possible to be well, where one is killed for want of sleep?

Trust. Dear me! it was so long before you rung, madam, I was in hopes your ladyship had been finely composed.

Lady T. Composed! why I have lain in an inn here; this house is worse than an inn with ten stage-coaches: what between my lord's impertinent people of business in a morning, and the intolerable thick shoes of footmen at noon, one has not a wink all night.

Trust. Indeed, madam, it's a great pity. my lord can't be persuaded into the hours of people of quality—though I must say that, madam, your ladyship is certainly the best matrimonial manager in town.

Lady T. Oh, you are quite mistaken, Trusty! I manage very ill; for, notwithstanding all the power I have, by never being over-lord of my lord—yet I want money infinitely oftener than he is willing to give it me.

Trust. Ah! if his lordship could but be brought to play himself, madam, then he might feel what it is to want money.

Lady T. Oh, don't talk of it! do you know that I am undone, Trusty?

Trust. Mercy forbid, madam!

Lady T. Broke, ruined, plundered!—stripped, even to a confiscation of my last guinea!

Trust. You don't tell me so, madam?

Lady T. And where to raise ten pound in the world—What is to be done, Trusty?

Trust. Truly, I wish I were wise enough to tell you, madam: but may be your ladyship may have a run of better fortune upon some of the good company that comes here to-night.

Lady T. But I have not a single guinea to try my fortune.

Trust. Ha! that's a bad business indeed, madam—Adad, I have a thought in my head, madam, if it is not too late—

Lady T. Out with it quickly, then, I beseech thee.

Trust. Has not the steward something of fifty pounds, madam, that you left in his hands to pay somebody about this time?

Lady T. Oh, ay; I had forgot—'twas to—a—what's his filthy name?

Trust. Now I remember, madam, 'twas to Mr. Lutestring, your old mercer, that your ladyship turned off about a year ago, because he would trust you no longer.

Lady T. The very wretch! If he has not paid it, run quickly, dear Trusty, and bid him bring it hither immediately—[*Exit Trusty.*] Well, sure mortal woman never had such fortune! five, five and nine, against poor seven for ever—No, after that horrid bar of my chance, that Lady Wronghead's fatal red fist upon the table, I saw it was impossible ever to win another stake—Sit up all night; lose all one's money; dream of winning thousands; wake without a shilling; and then—How like a hag I look!—In short

the pleasures of life are not worth this disorder, If it were not for shame, now, I could almost think Lady Grace's sober scheme not quite so ridiculous—If my wise lord could but hold his tongue for a week, 'tis odds but I should hate the town in a fortnight—But I will not be driven out of it, that's positive.

TRUSTY returns.

Trust. Oh, madam, there's no bearing of it! Mr. Lutestring was just let in at the door, as I came to the stair-foot; and the steward is now actually paying him the money in the hall.

Lady T. Run to the stair-case head again—and scream to him; that I must speak with him this instant. *[Trusty runs out and speaks.]*

Trust. Mr. Poundage—a-hem! Mr. Poundage, a word with you quickly, *[Without.]*

Pound. I'll come to you presently. *[Without.]*

Trusty. Presently won't do, man, you must come this minute. *[Without.]*

Pound. I am but just paying a little money here. *[Without.]*

Trust. Cods my life, paying money! Is the man distracted? Come here, I tell you, to my lady this moment, quick! *[Without.]*

TRUSTY returns.

Lady T. Will the monster come, or no?

Trust. Yes, I hear him now, madam; he is hobbling up as fast as he can.

Lady T. Don't let him come in—for he will keep such a babbling about his accounts—my brain is not able to bear him.

[Poundage comes to the door, with a money-bag in his hand.]

Trust. Oh, it's well you are come, sir! where's the fifty pounds?

Pound. Why, here it is; if you had not been in such haste, I should have paid it by this time—the man's now writing a receipt, below, for it.

Trust. No matter; my lady says you must not pay

him with that money! there's not enough, it seems; there's a pistole, and a guinea, that is not good, in it—besides, there is a mistake in the account too—*[Twitches the bag from him.]* But she is not at leisure to examine it now, so you must bid Mr. What-d'ye-call-um call another time.

Lady T. What is all that noise there?

Pound. Why, and it please your ladyship—

Lady T. Pr'ythee, don't plague me now; but do as you were ordered.

Pound. Nay, what your ladyship pleases, madam.

[Exit Poundage.]

Trust. There they are, madam—*[Pours the money out of the bag.]*—The pretty things—were so near falling into a nasty tradesman's hand. I protest it made me tremble for them—I fancy your ladyship had as good give me that bad guinea, for luck's sake—thank you, madam.

[Takes a guinea.]

Lady T. Why, I did not bid you take it.

Trust. No; but your ladyship looked as if you were just going to bid me; and so I was willing to save you the trouble of speaking, madam.

Lady T. Well, thou hast deserved it; and so, for once—but hark! don't I hear the man making a noise yonder? Though, I think, now, we may compound for a little of his ill-humour—

Trust. I'll listen.

Lady T. Pr'ythee do. *[Trusty goes to the door.]*

Trust. Ay, they are at it, madam—he's in a bitter passion with poor Poundage—Bless me! I believe he'll beat him—Mercy on us, how the wretch swears!

Lady T. And a sober citizen too! that's a shame.

Trust. Ha! I think all's silent of a sudden—may be the porter has knocked him down—I'll step and see—

[Exit Trusty.]

Lady T. These trades-people are the troublesomest creatures! No words will satisfy them.

[Trusty returns.]

Trust. Oh, madam! undone, undone! My lord has just bolted out upon the man, and is hearing all

his pitiful story over——If your ladyship pleases to come hither, you may hear him yourself.

Lady T. No matter; it will come round presently: I shall have it from my lord, without losing a word by the way, I'll warrant you.

Trust. Oh, lud, madam! here's my lord just coming in.

Lady T. Do you get out of the way, then. [*Exit Trusty.*] I am afraid I want spirits; but he will soon give 'em me.

Enter Lord TOWNLY.

Lord T. How comes it, madam, that a tradesman dares be clamorous in my house, for money due to him from you?

Lady T. You don't expect, my lord, that I should answer for other people's impertinence.

Lord T. I expect, madam, you should answer for your own extravagances, that are the occasion of it——I thought I had given you money three months ago, to satisfy all these sort of people.

Lady T. Yes; but you see they never are to be satisfied.

Lord T. Nor am I, madam, longer to be abused thus; what's become of the last five hundred I gave you?

Lady T. Gone.

Lord T. Gone! what way, madam?

Lady T. Half the town over, I believe, by this time.

Lord T. 'Tis well; I see ruin will make no impression, till it falls upon you.

Lady T. In short, my lord, if money is always the subject of our conversation, I shall make you no answer.

Lord T. Madam, madam, I will be heard, and make you answer.

Lady T. Make me! Then I must tell you, my lord, this is a language I have not been used to, and I won't bear it.

Lord T. Come, come, madam, you shall bear a great deal more, before I part with you.

Lady T. My lord, if you insult me, you will have as much to bear on your side, I can assure you.

Lord T. Pooh! your spirit grows ridiculous—you have neither honour, worth, or innocence to support it.

Lady T. You'll find, at least, I have resentment; and do you look well to the provocation.

Lord T. After those you have given me, madam, 'tis almost infamous to talk with you.

Lady T. I scorn your imputation, and your menaces. The narrowness of your heart's your monitor; 'tis there, there, my lord, you are wounded: you have less to complain of than many husbands of an equal rank to you.

Lord T. Death, madam! do you presume upon your corporal merit, that your person's less tainted than your mind? Is it there, there alone, an honest husband can be injured? Have you not every other vice that can debase your birth, or stain the heart of woman? Is not your health, your beauty, husband, fortune, family disclaimed, for nights consumed in riot and extravagance? The wanton does no more; if she conceals her shame, does less: and sure the dissolute avowed, as sorely wrongs my honour and my quiet.

Lady T. I see, my lord, what sort of wife might please you.

Lord T. Ungrateful woman! could you have seen yourself, you in yourself had seen her—I am amazed our legislature has left no precedent of a divorce, for this more visible injury, this adultery of the mind, as well as that of the person! When a woman's whole heart is alienated to pleasures I have no share in, what is it to me, whether a black ace, or a powdered coxcomb has possession of it.

Lady T. If you have not found it yet, my lord, this is not the way to get possession of mine, depend upon it.

Lord T. That, madam, I have long despaired of; and since our happiness cannot be mutual, 'tis fit that

with our hearts, our persons too should separate.—This house you sleep no more in: though your content might grossly feed upon the dishonour of a husband; yet my desires would starve upon the features of a wife.

Lady T. Your style, my lord, is much of the same delicacy with your sentiments of honour.

Lord T. Madam, madam, this is no-time for compliments—I have done with you.

Lady T. If we had never met, my lord, I had not broke my heart for it: but have a care; I may not, perhaps, be so easily recalled as you may imagine.

Lord T. Recalled!—Who's there?

Enter Servant.

Desire my sister and Mr. Manly to walk up.

[Exit Serv.]

Lady T. My lord, you may proceed as you please; but pray, what indiscretions have I committed, that are not daily practised by a hundred other women of quality?

Lord T. 'Tis not the number of ill wives, madam, that makes the patience of a husband less contemptible: and though a bad one may be the best man's lot, yet he'll make a better figure in the world, that keeps his misfortunes out of doors, than he that tamely keeps them within.

Lady T. I don't know what figure you may make, my lord; but I shall have no reason to be ashamed of mine, in whatever company I may meet you.

Lord T. Be sparing of your spirit, madam; you'll need it to support you.

Enter Lady GRACE and MANLY.

Mr. Manly, I have an act of friendship to beg of you, which wants more apologies than words can make for it.

Man. Then pray make none, my lord, that I may have the greater merit in obliging you.

Lord T. Sister, I have the same excuse to intreat of you, too.

Lady G. To your request, I beg, my lord.

Lord T. Thus then—As you both were present at

my ill-considered marriage, I now desire you each will be a witness of my determined separation—I know, sir, your good-nature, and my sister's, must be shocked at the office I impose on you; but as I don't ask your justification of my cause, so I hope you are conscious—that an ill woman can't reproach you, if you are silent, on her side.

Man. My lord, I never thought, till now, it could be difficult to oblige you.

Lady G. [*Aside.*] Heavens, how I tremble!

Lord T. For you, my Lady Townly, I need not here repeat the provocations of my parting with you—the world, I fear, is too well informed of them—For the good lord, your dead father's sake, I will still support you as his daughter—As Lord Townly's wife, you have had every thing a fond husband could bestow, and (to our mutual shame I speak it) more than happy wives desire—But those indulgences must end; state, equipage, and splendor, but ill becomes the vices that misuse them—The decent necessities of life shall be supplied—but not one article to luxury; not even the coach that waits to carry you from hence shall you ever use again. Your tender aunt, my lady Lovemore, with tears, this morning, has consented to receive you; where, if time, and your condition, brings you to a due reflection, your allowance shall be increased—but if you are still lavish of your little, or pine for past licentious pleasures, that little shall be less: nor will I call that soul my friend that names you in my hearing.

Lady G. My heart bleeds for her. [*Aside.*

Lord T. Oh, Manly, look there! turn back thy thoughts with me, and witness to my growing love. There was a time, when I believed that form incapable of vice or of decay; there I proposed the partner of an easy home; there I, for ever, hoped to find a cheerful companion, an agreeable intimate, a faithful friend, a useful help-mate, and a tender mother—but, oh, how bitter now the disappointment!

Man. The world is different in its sense of happi-

ness; offended as you are, I know you will still be just.

Lord T. Fear me not.

Man. This last reproach, I see, has struck her.

[*Aside.*

Lord T. No, let me not (though I this moment cast her from my heart for ever) let me not urge her punishment beyond her crimes—I know the world is fond of any tale that feeds its appetite of scandal: and as I am conscious severities of this kind seldom fail of imputations too gross to mention, I here, before you both, acquit her of the least suspicion, raised against the honour of my bed. Therefore, when abroad her conduct may be questioned, do her same that justice.

Lady T. Oh, sister!

[*Turns to Lady Grace, weeping.*

Lord T. When I am spoken of, where without favour this action may be canvassed, relate but half my provocations, and give me up to censure. [*Going.*

Lady T. Support me! save me! hide me from the world?

[*Falling on Lady Grace's neck.*

Lord T. [*Returning.*].—I had forgot me—You have no share in my resentment, therefore, as you have lived in friendship with her, your parting may admit of gentler terms than suit the honour of an injured husband.

[*Offers to go out.*

Man. [*Interposing.*] My lord, you must not, shall not leave her thus! One moment's stay can do your cause no wrong! If looks can speak the anguish of her heart, I'll answer with my life there's something labouring in her mind, that would you bear the hearing might deserve it.

Lord T. Consider! since we no more can meet, press not my staying to insult her.

Lady T. Yet stay, my lord—the little I would say will not deserve an insult; and undeserved, I know your nature gives it not. But as you've called in friends, to witness your resentment, let them be equal hearers of my last reply.

Lord T. I shan't refuse you that, madam—be it so.

Lady T. My lord, you ever have complain'd I wanted love: but as you kindly have allowed I never gave it to another; so, when you hear the story of my heart, though you may still complain, you will not wonder at my coldness.

Lady G. This promises a reverse of temper. [*Apart.*

Man. This my lord, you are concerned to hear.

Lord T. Proceed, I am attentive.

Lady T. Before I was your bride, my lord, the flattering world had talked me into beauty; which at my glass, my youthful vanity confirmed. Wild with that fame, I thought mankind my slaves, I triumphed over hearts, while all my pleasure was their pain: yet was my own so equally insensible to all, that when a father's firm commands enjoined me to make choice of one, I even there declined the liberty he gave, and to his own election yielded up my youth—his tender care, my lord, directed him to you—Our hands were joined! But still my heart was wedded to its folly! My only joy was power, command, society, profuseness, and to lead in pleasures! The husband's right to rule I thought a vulgar law, which only the deformed or meanly-spirited obeyed! I knew no directors, but my passions; no master, but my will! Even you, my lord, some time o'ercome by love, was pleased with my delights! nor, then, foresaw this mad misuse of your indulgence—And, though I call myself ungrateful, while I own it, yet, as a truth it cannot be denied—that kind indulgence has undone me; it added strength to my habitual failings, and in an heart thus warm, in wild unthinking life, no wonder if the gentler sense of love was lost.

Lord T. Oh, Manly! where has this creature's heart been buried?

[*Apart.*

Man. If yet recoverable—How vast the treasure.

[*Apart.*

Lady T. What I have said, my lord, is not my excuse, but my confession; my errors (give 'em, if you please, a harder name) cannot be defended! No!

What's in its nature wrong, no words can palliate, no plea can alter! What then remains in my condition, but resignation to your pleasure? Time only can convince you of my future conduct: therefore 'till I have lived an object of forgiveness, I dare not hope for pardon—The penance of a lonely contrite life were little to the innocent; but to have deserved this separation, will strew perpetual thorns upon my pillow.

Lady G. Oh, happy, heavenly hearing!

Lady T. Sister, farewell! [*Kissing her.*] Your virtue needs no warning from the shame that falls on me: but when you think I have atoned my follies past—persuade your injured brother to forgive them.

Lord T. No, madam! Your errors thus renounced, this instant are forgotten! So deep, so due a sense of them, has made you, what my utmost wishes formed, and all my heart has sighed for.

Lady T. [*Turning to Lady Grace.*] How odious does this goodness make me!

Lady G. How amiable your thinking so!

Lord T. Long parted friends, that pass through easy voyages of life, receive but common gladness in their meeting; but from a shipwreck saved we mingle tears with our embraces! [*Embracing Lady Townly.*

Lady T. What words? what love? what duty can repay such obligations?

Lord T. Preserve but this desire to please, your power is endless.

Lady T. Oh!—'till this moment, never did I know, my lord, I had a heart to give you.

Lord T. By Heaven! this yielding hand, when first it gave you to my wishes, presented not a treasure more desirable! Oh, Manly! sister! as you have often shared in my disquiet, partake of my felicity! my new-born joy! see here the bride of my desires! This may be called my wedding-day.

Lady G. Sister, (for now, methinks, that name is dearer to my heart than ever) let me congratulate the happiness that opens to you.

Man. Long, long, and mutual may it flow—

Lord T. To make our happiness complete, my dear, join here with me to give a hand, that amply will repay the obligation.

Lady T. Sister, a day like this—

Lady G. Admits of no excuse against the general joy. [Gives her hand to Manly.]

Man. A joy like mine—despairs of words to speak it.

Lord T. Oh, Manly, how the name of friend endears the brother! [Embracing him.]

Man. Your words, my lord, will warm me to deserve them.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. My lord, the apartments are full of masqueraders—And some people of quality there desire to see your lordship and my lady.

Lady T. I thought, my lord, your orders had forbid their revelling?

Lord T. No, my dear, Manly has desired their admittance to-night, it seems, upon a particular occasion—Say we will wait upon them instantly.

[Exit Servant.]

Lady T. I shall be but ill company to them.

Lord T. No matter: not to see them, would on a sudden be too particular. Lady Grace will assist you to entertain them.

Lady T. With her, my lord, I shall be always easy—Sister, to your unerring virtue I now commit the guidance of my future days—

Never the paths of pleasure more to tread,

But where your guarded innocence shall lead;

For in the marriage state, the world must own,

Divided happiness was never known.

To make it mutual nature points the way:

Let husbands govern: gentle wives obey. [Exeunt.]

SCENE III.

“ Opening to another Apartment discovers a great
 “ number of people in masquerade, talking all toge-
 “ ther, and playing upon one another. Lady Wrong-

“ head 'as a shepherdess; Jenny as a nun; the
“ 'Squire as a running footman; and the Count in a
“ domino. After some time Lord and Lady Townly,
“ with Lady Grace, enter to them unmasked.

“ Lord T. So! here's a great deal of company.

“ Lady T. A great many people, my lord, but no
“ company—as you'll find—for here's one now that
“ seems to have a mind to entertain us.

“ [*A Mask, after some affected gesture, makes
up to Lady Townly.*]

“ Mask. Well, dear Lady Townly, shan't we see
“ you by-and-by?

“ Lady T. I don't know you, madam.

“ Mask. Don't you seriously? [*In a squeaking tone.*]

“ Lady T. Not I, indeed.

“ Mask. Well, that's charming; but can't you
“ guess?

“ Lady T. Yes, I could guess wrong, I believe.

“ Mask. That's what I'd have you do.

“ Lady T. But, madam, if I don't know you at
“ all, is not that as well.

“ Mask. Ay, but you do know me.

“ Lady T. Dear sister, take her off o' my hands;
“ there's no bearing this. [*Apart.*]

“ Lady G. I fancy I know you, madam.

“ Mask. I fancy you don't; what makes you think
“ you do?

“ Lady G. Because I have heard you talk.

“ Mask. Ay, but you don't know my voice, I'm
“ sure.

“ Lady G. There is something in your wit and hu-
“ mour, madam, so very much your own, it is im-
“ possible you can be any body but my Lady Trifle.

“ Mask. [*Unmasking.*] Dear Lady Grace! thou
“ art a charming creature.

“ Lady G. Is there nobody else we know here?

“ Mask. Oh dear, yes! I have found out fifty al-
“ ready.

“ Lady G. Pray who are they!

“ Mask. Oh, charming company! there's Lady

“Ramble—Lady Riot—Lady Kill-care—Lady Squander—Lady Strip—Lady Pawn—and the Duchess of Single-Guinea.

“*Lord T.* Is it not hard, my dear, that people of sense and probity are sometimes forced to seem fond of such company? [*Apart.*]

““*Lady T.* My lord, it will always give me pain to remember their acquaintance, but none to drop it immediately. [*Apart.*]

“*Lady G.* But you have given us no account of the men, madam. Are they good for any thing?

“*Mask.* Oh, yes, you must know, I always find out them by their endeavours to find out me.

“*Lady G.* Pray, who are they?

“*Mask.* Why, for your men of tip-top wit and pleasure, about town, there's my Lord—Bite—Lord Archwag—Young Brazen-wit—Lord Timberdown—Lord Joint-life—and—Lord Mortgage. Then for your pretty fellows only—there's Sir Powder-Peacock—Lord Lapwing—Billy Magpie—Beau Frightful—Sir Paul Plaister-crown, and the Marquis of Monkey-man.

“*Lady G.* Right! and these are the fine gentlemen that never want elbow-room at an assembly.

“*Mask.* The rest, I suppose, by their tawdry hired habits, are tradesmen's wives, inns-of-court beaux, Jews, and kept mistresses.

“*Lord T.* An admirable collection!

“*Lady G.* Well, of all our public diversions, I am amazed how this, that is so very expensive, and has so little to show for it, can draw so much company together.

“*Lord T.* Oh, if it were not expensive, the better sort would not come into it: and because money can purchase a ticket, the common people scorn to be kept out of it.

“*Mask.* Right, my lord. Poor Lady Grace! I suppose you are under the same astonishment that an opera should draw so much good company.

“*Lady G.* Not at all, madam; it's an easier mat-

"ter sure to gratify the ear, than the understanding.
 "But have you no notion, madam, of receiving pleasure and profit at the same time?

"*Mask.* Oh, quite none! unless it be sometimes winning a great stake; laying down a *vole sans prendre*, may come up, to the profitable pleasure you were speaking of.

"*Lord T.* You seem attentive, my dear! [*Apart.*

"*Lady T.* I am, my lord; and amazed at my own follies, so strongly painted in another woman.

[*Apart.*

"*Lady G.* But see, my lord, we had best adjourn our debate, I believe, for here are some masks that seem to have a mind to divert other people as well as themselves.

"*Lord T.* The least we can do is to give them a clear stage then.

"[*A dance of masks here in various characters.*

"This was a favour extraordinary.

"*Enter MANLY.*

"Oh, Manly, I thought we had lost you.

"*Man.* I ask pardon, my lord; but I have been obliged to look a little after my country-family.

"*Lord T.* Well, pray, what have you done with them?

"*Man.* They are all in the house here, among the masks, my lord; if your lordship has curiosity enough to step into a lower apartment, in three minutes I'll give you an ample account of them.

"*Lord T.* Oh, by all means: we'll wait upon you.

"[*The scene shuts upon the masks to a smaller apartment.*]"

MANLY re-enters with Sir FRANCIS WRONGHEAD.

Sir Fran. Well cousin, you have made my very hair stand on end! Waunds! if what you tell me be true, I'll stuff my whole family into a stage-coach, and trundle them into the country again on Monday morning.

Man. Stick to that, sir, and we may yet find a way to redeem all. In the mean time, place yourself be-

hind this screen, and for the truth of what I have told you, take the evidence of your own senses: but be sure you keep close till I give you the signal.

Sir Fran. Sir, I'll warrant you—Ah, my Lady! my Lady Wronghead! What a bitter business have you drawn me into.

Man. Hush! to your post; here comes one couple already.

[*Sir Francis retires behind the screen. Exit Manly.*

Enter MYRTILLA with 'Squire RICHARD.

'Squ. Rich. Well, is this the doctor's chamber?

Myr. Yes, yes, speak softly.

'Squ. Rich. Well, but where is he?

Myr. He'll be ready for us presently, but he says he can't do us 'the good turn without witnesses: so, when the count and your sister come, you know he and you may be fathers for one another.

'Squ. Rich. Well, well, tit for tat! ay, ay, that will be friendly.

Myr. And see, here they come.

Enter Count BASSET, and Miss JENNY.

Count Bas. So, so, here's your brother and his bride, before us, my dear.

Jenny. Well, I vow, my heart's at my mouth still! I thought I should never have got rid of mamma; but while she stood gaping upon the dance, I gave her the slip! Lawd, do but feel how it beats here.

Count Bas. Oh, the pretty flutterer! I protest, my dear, you have put mine into the same palpitation!

Jenny. Ay, say you so—but let's see now—Oh, lud! I vow it thumps purely—well, well, well, I see it would do, and so where's the parson?

Count Bas. Mrs. Myrtilla, will you be so good as to see if the doctor's ready for us.

Myr. He only staid for you, sir, I'll fetch him immediately. [Exit.

Jenny. Pray, sir, am not I to take place of mamma, when I'm a countess?

Count Bas. No doubt on't, my dear.

Jenny. Oh, lud! how her back will be up then,

when she meets me at an assembly, or you and I in our coach-and-six at Hyde-Park together!

Count Bas. Ay, or when she hears the box-keepers at an opera, call out—The Countess of Basset's servants!

Jenny. Well, I say it, that will be delicious! And then, mayhap, to have a fine gentleman, with a star and a what-d'ye-call um ribbon, lead me to my chair, with his hat under his arm all the way! Hold up, says the chairman; and so, says I, my lord, your humble servant. I suppose, madam, says he, we shall see you at my lady Quadrille's? Ay, ay, to be sure, my lord, says I—So in swops me, with my hoop stuffed up to my forehead; and away they trot, swing! swang! with my tassels dangling, and my flambeaux blazing, and—Oh! it's a charming thing to be a woman of quality!

Count Bas. Well! I see that, plainly, my dear, there's ne'er a duchess of 'em all will become an equipage like you.

Jenny. Well, well, do you find equipage, and I'll find airs, I warrant you.

“ SONG.

“ *What though they call me country lass,*

“ *I read it plainly in my glass,*

“ *That for a duchess I might pass;*

“ *Oh, could I see the day!*

“ *Would fortune but attend my call,*

“ *At park, at play, at ring and ball,*

“ *I'd brave the proudest of them all,*

“ *With a stand by—clear the way.*

“ *Surrounded by a crowd of beaux,*

“ *With smart toupees, and powder'd clothes,*

“ *At rivals I'd turn up my nose;*

“ *Oh, could I see the day!*

“ *I'd dart such glances from these eyes,*

“ *Should make some lord or duke my prize:*

“ *And then, oh, how I'd tyrannize,*

“ *With a stand by—clear the way.*

" Oh, then for ev'ry new delight,
 " For equipage and diamonds bright,
 " Quadrille, and plays, and balls all night;
 " Oh, could I see the day!
 " Of love and joy I'd take my fill,
 " The tedious hours of life to kill,
 " In ev'ry thing I'd have my will,
 " With a stand by—clear the way."

'Squ. Rich. Troth! I think this masquerading's the merriest game that ever I saw in my life! Thof' in my mind, and there were but a little wrestling or cudgel-playing naw, it would help it hugely. But what a rope makes the parson stay so?

Count Bas. Oh, here he comes, I believe.

Enter MYRTILLA, with a Constable.

Const. Well, madam, pray which is the party that wants a spice of my office, here?

Myr. That's the gentleman. [*Pointing to the Count:*

Count Bas. Hey-day! what, in masquerade, doctor!

Const. Doctor! Sir, I believe you have mistaken your man: but if you are called Count Basset, I have a billet-doux in my hand for you, that will set you right presently.

Count Bas. What the devil's the meaning of all this?

Const. Only my Lord Chief Justice's warrant against you for forgery, sir.

Count Bas. Blood and thunder!

Const. And so, sir, if you please to pull off your fool's frock there, I'll wait upon you to the next justice of peace immediately.

Jenny. Oh, dear me, what's the matter? [*Trembling.*

Count Bas. Oh, nothing, only a masquerading frolic, my dear.

'Squ. Rich. Oh, ho, is that all?

Sir Fran. No, sirrah! that is not all.

[*Sir Francis coming softly behind the 'Squire, knocks him down with his cane.*

Enter MANLY.

'Squ. Rich. Oh, lawd! Oh, lawd! he has beaten my brains out.

Man. Hold, hold, sir Francis, have a little mercy upon my poor godson, pray sir.

Sir Fran. Wounds, cousin, I han't patience.

Count Bas. Manly! nay then I'm blown to the devil. [Aside]

'Sou. Rich. Oh, my head! my head!

Enter Lady Wronghead.

Lady Wrong. What's the matter here, gentlemen? For heaven's sake! What, are you murdering my children?

Const. No, no, madam! no murder! only a little suspicion of felony, that's all.

Sir Fran. [To Jenny.] And for you, Mrs Hot-upon't, I could find in my heart to make you wear that habit as long as you live, you jade you. Do you know, hussy, that you were within two minutes of marrying a pickpocket.

Count Bas. So, so, all's out I find. [Aside]

Jenny. Oh, the mercy! why, pray, papa, is not the count a man of quality, then?

Sir Fran. Oh, yes, one of the unhang'd ones, it seems.

Lady Wrong. [Aside.] Married! Oh, the confident thing! There was his urgent business then—slighted for her! I ha'n't patience!—and, for ought I know, I have been all this while making a friendship with a highwayman.

Man. Mr. Constable, secure there.

Sir Fran. Ah, my lady! my lady! this comes of your journey to London: but now I'll have a frolic of my own, madam; therefore pack up your trumpery this very night, for the moment my horses are able to crawl, you and your brats shall make a journey into the country again.

Lady Wrong. Indeed you are mistaken, Sir Francis—I shall not stir out of town yet, I promise you.

Sir Fran. Not stir? Wounds, madam—

Man. Hold, sir!—if you'll give me leave a little—I fancy I shall prevail with my lady to think better on't:

Sir Fran. Ah, cousin, you are a friend indeed!

Man. [*Apart to my lady.*] Look you madam, as to the favour you designed me, in sending this spurious letter inclosed to my Lady Grace, all the revenge I have taken, is to have saved your son and daughter from ruin—Now if you will take them fairly and quietly into the country again, I will save your ladyship from ruin.

Lady Wrong. What do you mean, sir?

Man. Why, Sir Francis—shall never know what is in this letter; look upon it. How it came into my hands you shall know at leisure.

Lady Wrong. Ha! my billet-doux to the count! and an appointment in it! I shall sink with confusion!

Man. What shall I say to Sir Francis, madam.

Lady Wrong. Dear sir, I am in such a trembling! preserve my honour, and I am all obedience.

[*Apart to Manly.*

Man. Sir Francis—my lady is ready to receive your commands for her journey, whenever you please to appoint it.

Sir Fran. Ah, cousin, I doubt I am obliged to you for it.

Man. Come, come, Sir Francis, take it as you find it. Obedience in a wife is a good thing, though it were never so wonderful!—And now, sir, we have nothing to do but to dispose of this gentleman.

Count Bas. Mr. Manly; sir, I hope you won't ruin me.

Man. Did not you forge this note for five hundred pounds, sir?

Count Bas. Sir—I see you know the world, and therefore I shall not pretend to prevaricate—But it has hurt nobody yet, sir; I beg you will not stigmatize me; since you have spoiled my fortune in one family, I hope you won't be so cruel to a young fellow, as to put it out of my power, sir, to make it in another, sir.

Man. Look you, sir, I have not much time to waste with you: but if you expect mercy yourself, you must shew it to one you have been cruel to.

Count Bas. Cruel, sir!

Man. Have you not ruined this young woman?

Count Bas. I, sir!

Man. I know you have—therefore you can't blame her, if, in the fact you are charged with, she is a principal witness against you. However, you have one, and only one chance to get off with. Marry her this instant—and you take off her evidence.

Count Bas. Dear sir!

Man. No words, sir; a wife or a mittimus.

Count Bas. Lord, sir! this is the most unmerciful mercy!

Man. A private penance, or a public one—Constable!

Count Bas. Hold, sir, since you are pleased to give me my choice, I will not make so ill a compliment to the lady, as not to give her the preference.

Man. It must be done this minute, sir: the chaplain you expected is still within call.

Count Bas. Well, sir—since it must be so—Come, spouse—I am not the first of the fraternity, that has run his head into one noose, to keep it out of another.

Myr. Come, sir, don't repine: marriage is at worst but playing upon the square.

Count Bas. Ay, but the worst of the match too, is the devil.

Man. Well, sir, to let you see it is not so bad as you think it; as a reward for her honesty, in detecting your practices, instead of the forged bill you would have put upon her, there's a real one of five hundred pounds to begin a new honey-moon with.

[Gives it to Myrtilla.]

Count Bas. Sir, this is so generous an act—

Man. No compliments, dear sir—I am not at leisure now to receive them. Mr. Constable, will you be so good as to wait upon this gentleman into the next room, and give this lady in marriage to him?

Const. Sir, I'll do it faithfully.

Count Bas. Well, five hundred will serve to make a handsome push with, however.

[*Exeunt Count Bas. Myr. and Constable.*]

Sir Fran. And that I may be sure my family's rid of him for ever—come, my lady, let's even take our children along with us, and be all witnesses of the ceremony.

[*Exeunt Sir Fran. Lady Wrong. Miss, and Squire.*]

Man. Now, my lord, you may enter.

Enter Lord and Lady TOWNLY, and Lady GRACE.

Lord T. So, sir, I give you joy of your negotiation.

Man. You overhead it all, I presume?

Lady G. From first to last, sir.

Lord T. Never were knaves and fools better disposed of.

Man. A sort of poetical justice, my lord, not much above the judgment of a modern comedy.

Lord T. To heighten that resemblance, I think, sister, there only wants your rewarding the hero of the fable, by naming the day of his happiness.

Lady G. This day, to-morrow, every hour, I hope, of life to come, will shew I want not inclination to complete it.

Man. Whatever I may want, madam, you will always find endeavours to deserve you.

Lord T. Then all are happy.

Lady T. Sister, I give you joy consummate as the happiest pair can boast.

In you methinks, as in a glass, I see

The happiness that once advanc'd to me.

So visible the bliss, so plain the way,

How was it possible my sense could stray?

But now, a convert to this truth I come,

That married happiness is never found from home.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

EPILOGUE.

METHINKS I hear some powder'd critics say;

"Damn it, this wise reform'd has spoil'd the play!"

"The coxcomb should have drawn her more in fashion,

"Have gratified her softer inclination,

"Have tip'd her a gallant, and clinch'd the provocation."

*But there our Lord stopp'd short: for 'twere uncivil
To have a modern belle, all o'er a devil!*

He hop'd, in honour of the sex, the age

Would hear one mended woman—on the stage.

From whence, you see, by common sense's rules,

Wives might be governed, were not husbands fools.

Whate'er by nature dames are prone to do,

They seldom stray but when they govern you.

When the wild wife perceives her deary tame,

No wonder then she plays him all the game.

But men of sense meet rarely that disaster;

Women take pride where merit is their master:

Nay, she that with a weak man wisely lives,

Will secrett obey the due commands he gives!

Happy obedience is no more a wonder,

When men are men, and keep them kindly under.

But modern consorts are such high-bred creatures,

They think a husband's power degrades their features:

That nothing more proclaims a reigning beauty,

Than that she never was reproach'd with duty:

And that the greatest Jealousy e'er sent,

Is in a spouse, incurious and content.

*To give such dames a diff'rent cast of thought,
By calling home the mind, these scenes were wrought.
If with a hand too rude the task is done,
We hope the scheme, by Lady Grace laid down,
Will all such freedom with the sex alone,
That virtue there unsoiled, by modish art,
Throws out attractions for a Manly's heart!*

*You, you, then, ladies, whose unquestion'd lives
Give you the foremost fame of happy wives,
Protect, for its attempt, this helpless play;
Nor leave it to the vulgar taste a prey;
Appear the frequent champions of its cause,
Direct the crowd, and give yourselves applause.*

THE END.



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